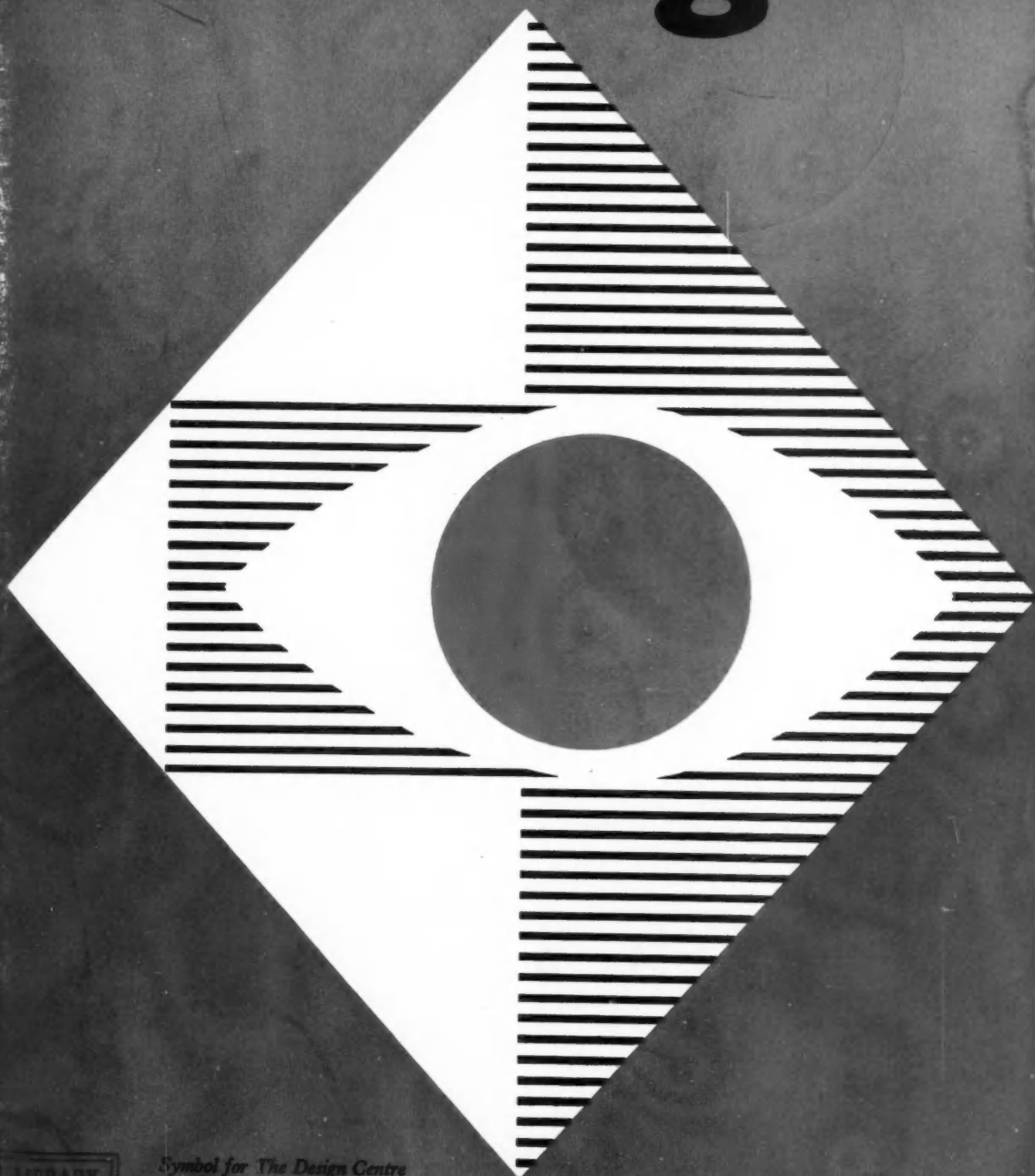


WS.D462

Art & Arch

# Design



*Symbol for The Design Centre*

LIBRARY

1955

The Council of Industrial Design October 1955 No 82 Price 2s 6d

LIBRARY



Grosvenor House Hotel, London

*In their homes  
MORE AND MORE PEOPLE  
are enjoying  
the unequalled comfort of*

# **Dunlopillo**

## **MATTRESSES AND CUSHIONING**

*In their hotels  
MORE AND MORE PEOPLE  
are expecting  
that same comfort*

*Illustrated are five of the large number of internationally famous hotels that have installed Dunlopillo.*



Hotel Victoria Plaza, Montevideo



Hotel Tequendama, Bogota



Dawson's Hotel  
Johannesburg



Hotel Leofric, Coventry

NUMBER 82

OCTOBER 1955

## Contents

POINTS AND POINTERS 12

SLA - 25 Wyndham Goodden 13

EALING STUDIOS AND S. JOHN WOODS  
Bernard Denvir 19

LEOFRIC SHATTERS A MYTH  
John E. Blake 22

SHOWROOM FOR OFFICE FURNITURE  
Elizabeth Gundry 27

SHAVING IN COMFORT 28

DRAWING IN GLASS 30

INTRODUCTION TO THE DESIGN CENTRE 31

THE SYMBOL FOR THE DESIGN CENTRE 32

HOW THE EXHIBITS FOR THE DESIGN  
CENTRE WILL BE CHOSEN 34

REVIEW OF CURRENT DESIGN 36

FROM TALK TO TRADE 38

FURNITURE SURVEY: 8 Outdoor furniture  
A. Gardner-Medwin 43

OVERSEA REVIEW: U S A 47

ONE MORE WORD ABOUT TEAPOTS  
D. M. Forrest 50

NEWS 51 LETTERS 53 BOOKS 55

EDITOR: Michael Farr

EDITORIAL ADVISERS:

Sir Gordon Russell, Alister Maynard,  
Paul Reilly, J. Noel White, Peter Hatch

ART EDITOR: Kenneth Garland

ASSISTANT EDITORS: John E. Blake,  
Richard Rhodes

PRODUCTION: Aubrey Hewitt

STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER: Dennis Hooker

BUSINESS MANAGER: Arthur Sudbery

EDITORIAL · CIRCULATION · ADVERTISEMENTS

28 Haymarket, London SW1

Telephone TRAFALGAR 8000

AND

95 Bothwell St, Glasgow C2

Telephone Glasgow CENTRAL 2991

YEARLY SUBSCRIPTION RATES: POST FREE  
UNITED KINGDOM 30s NORTH AMERICA \$5

DESIGN MAY BE OBTAINED FROM BOOKSELLERS AT  
HOME AND ABROAD

# Design

## The Design Centre

by Sir Gordon Russell

THERE CAN BE NO DOUBT that the present time is opportune for the setting up of a permanent exhibition of well designed British goods in London. The interest in the project taken by manufacturers in many different trades is encouraging and most of them are anxious to be better informed on the public's reaction to improved designs. In fact the idea of selecting goods in order to show them to the greatest advantage is gaining ground rapidly in industry. And whenever selection crops up design is bound to be considered as one facet of quality. Recently the Plastics Institute approached the Council for help in selecting 40 of the best designed articles in the 'British Plastics Exhibition' and they were shown there in a special display. There is a movement in another trade among firms making well designed goods to group their stands together at the trade show next year. In printing, an important service trade, the Council has several times collaborated with the manufacturers' federation in selecting examples of good work to tour for the benefit of printers in the Provinces. In china and glass the trade federations have welcomed the Council's efforts to organise courses for retail salesmen. None of these things could have happened 10 years ago. All of them may be regarded as straws showing that the design current is flowing at an increasing pace in the right direction. The opening of a national showroom in London will be a great encouragement to all those firms who have been design pioneers. It will also stimulate doubters to take the subject more seriously, for it is the Council's ambition to prove that good design is good business.

To do this the Council aims to interest five groups in its new venture. The *manufacturer*, without whose collaboration The Centre could not be set up. The *oversea buyer* and the *retailer*, without whose collaboration well designed goods cannot be made available to the public. The *designer*, without whom well designed goods cannot be made. The *educationist*, who is responsible for the training of designers and the extension of visual education generally. The *public*, who by being more selective in its purchases can exert the greatest influence of all. It will be the aim of the Council through the main display and a lively series of small specialist exhibitions, conferences, lectures, articles and discussions to secure the active co-operation of all these groups, without which success in full measure is not possible.

This is no attempt to impose a style or taste. It is a bold experiment in collaboration, in which the Council proudly accepts the responsibility of leadership.

# POINTS and POINTERS

**Selling - U S A style.** The American market for good quality modern design is more promising than many British manufacturers realise. For furniture, which is not generally thought of as a suitable export to America, the greatest opportunities exist for chairs and occasional pieces. A low competitive price is not the criterion; everything depends on distinguished design and craftsmanship and reliable delivery. The Danes and Italians are showing the way with notable successes that have what the Americans call good 'pace-setting' quality. Their chairs are particularly popular on the vast decorators' market, but they can also be found in leading stores where they are arranged not only for sale but to accent less expensive modern suites from American firms. To take full advantage of the market there is a need for a *typically British style*, and this, it must be admitted, has not yet emerged with sufficient certainty in the post-war years.

For some reason hardly any of the

best modern British furnishing fabrics are to be found on the American market. In a recent interview with DESIGN's correspondent the director of one of New York's largest importers of fabrics made it clear that Britain is associated only with hand-block prints of period design. The market for these fabrics has been established for more than 50 years, but a very much larger market for screen and roller-printed designs, although naturally dominated by American firms, has been opened for profitable business by Swedish and German exporters. Lively patterns in colours currently in vogue show clearly that German designers know intimately the demands of the market. Again price is not the criterion although salesmanship is important. To begin with it rests with British manufacturers to appreciate more accurately the American need for modern designs.

**Bodyline.** The London 'Motor Show' opens on October 19. This then seems to be the time for a reminder of the need for greater distinction in the design of the modern British car. Writing recently in 'The Statist', Giovanni Lurani, editor of 'Auto Italiana', pointed to

the wide use of Italian designers and prototypes by leading manufacturers in Europe and America. Several well known British makers have also employed Italian designers, but said Signor Lurani, "it is probably true that British cars today, except for Rolls-Royce, Bentley and Daimler, while they may satisfy the naturally conservative British taste, seem less attractive, and even appear old-fashioned once they have crossed the Channel". And he went on to suggest that the British industry, "with its production of fine, well built and efficient cars", might profitably engage Italian coachwork designers to give its cars "that grace and harmony of line which they at present lack".

But does not the necessary talent lie nearer home? Though few would dispute that body design is not a strong point with British cars - the best designs are to be seen in the Ford range and they have an American origin - the industry employs or has at its disposal a number of creative forward-looking designers. Have they been encouraged to make their mark at the coming 'Motor Show'? Competition in design will be keen, for our own cars will be compared with those from America, Canada, France, Germany, Italy and Czechoslovakia. It has been claimed by the organisers of the exhibition, the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders, that "Britain retains her world lead in car exports". It would be encouraging if she could increase it by better body styling.

'Motor Show', Earls Court, London, October 19-29, daily 10 am-9 pm, except Sunday.



**Prestige.** *Glowing reports have been received from the operators of the Vickers 'Viscount' airliners now in service in America. Capital Airlines claim that they are an "unqualified success". Only three out of the 60 ordered are in operation and yet the travelling public is reputed to be*

*showing great interest and confidence in this new type of passenger plane. How much do appearances count in winning this victory? Undoubtedly there are vitally important innovations to be talked of first, including turboprops, but to gain such swift approval 'looks' must count.*

**FLW furnishings.** Introduced this month on the American home furnishings market is a range of designs by Frank Lloyd Wright, the 86 year old architect. Wallpapers, woven and printed fabrics and furniture are grouped under the familiar title 'Taliesin'. The prestige versus the aesthetic value of the new range is yet to be calculated, but DESIGN hopes to show photographs shortly

Even on its own showing the Society of Industrial Artists had a stormy youth: but a stormy youth is often not unconnected with great talent. This year the Society celebrates its twenty-fifth anniversary – its first quarter century. Twenty-one is called the age of discretion; but at twenty-five a still young and lusty body, growing in achievement and experience, can begin to look back upon its salad days. DESIGN on behalf of the CoID is happy to salute the President and Council, the Fellows, Members and Licentiates of this professional body of designers to whose pioneering work it owes so much and with whom it has invariably had such close and happy relations.



FOR NON-PROFESSIONAL READERS it is perhaps a good thing to describe exactly what today the Society of Industrial Artists is, its purpose and necessity. There are in this country four main bodies concerned with the practice and promotion of industrial design: the Royal Society of Arts, which is, as it were, the academy of design, the guardian of its standards, on the one hand patron of young talent with its bursaries and medals, and on the other laureant of the famous with its award 'Royal Designer for Industry', limited to 40 souls. Second – these are not listed in order of importance or of history, but, so far as possible, of clarity – is the Royal College of Art founded, as the result of a Select Committee of the House of Commons on Arts and Manufacturers, in 1837. This is the only national college of design, drawing its students by competitive examination from all the art schools and colleges of the kingdom and equipping them for life in industry with a post-graduate training in the subject of their choice. Third let us put the CoID: the body financed with public monies by the Board of Trade, through which the Government attempts to raise the whole standard of design throughout British industry – both for its own sake and because the competitive quality of so many of our exports depends upon it. Fourth, but not quite last and by no means least, the Society of Industrial Artists which is, as it were, the reaction of a healthy plant to so much top dressing. The SIA is the one professional body

## Wyndham Goodden

Portraits of the five post-war Presidents of the SIA are reproduced below and on pages 14 and 15, together with typical examples of their work.



Milner Gray 1945-49

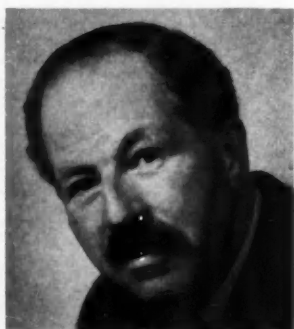
A decorated, cut and etched glass screen designed for the Royal Box at the Royal Festival Hall. SIA symbol also by Milner Gray.



## Post-war Presidents ▼



**Christian Barman 1949-51**  
*Electric iron for H M V Household Appliances Ltd.*



**Lynton Lamb 1951-53**  
*Book jacket for Hogarth Press*



organised by designers themselves to set up codes of conduct for their individual dealings with industry, to publish scales of fees applicable to each group – textile, ceramic, furniture, display, etc – to make its membership “a guarantee of technical proficiency and aesthetic ability”: in general to make of industrial design a true profession. How well it has achieved this will appear. Finally should be added at the extreme poles of our survey, the Industrial Art Committee of the Federation of British Industries, a body organised by industry itself, which under successive chairmen of the greatest perception and ability – notably Sir Charles Tennyson and Sir Ernest Goodale – has done so much to make the marriage of technique and talent fruitful: and at the other end the D I A, the Design and Industries Association, a body of devoted voluntary workers organised in regional societies and drawn from all sections of the community – designers, propagandists, teachers, business men.

## Name and origins

Industrial art we can all understand and recognise: a society of industrial artists, however diverse its membership may be, therefore has meaning. As Milner Gray said in his presidential speech in 1945: “Today patronage is vested in those who buy what the machine produces: genius is valid no longer if its gifts are squandered in isolation.” It is questionable if genius has ever been squandered in isolation, but it is clear enough that a society of industrial artists is a society of those who work for the machine. Even so it is possible to speculate as to whether S I A is the best title with which to achieve the Society’s more public aims. Industrial designers, one would have thought, can have almost nothing in common – personalities and sympathies apart – with commercial artists, almost nothing which a society common to them both can serve. While an industrial designer must have much in common on the one hand with architects and on the other with engineers. The way in which an illustrator or commercial artist deals with his publisher – be he editor, manufacturer, public authority or advertising agency – is radically different from the way in which an industrial designer, creating or re-creating prototypes for quantity production, must work with his client; and it would be a remarkable society which could look after the interests of both with equal efficiency and impartiality. In truth it is a remarkable Society; but the dilemma, if not apparent from the first, must have lain very near the surface of the Society’s early years, and, one would guess, have weakened its unity and purpose. Look at the names of some of its earliest officers: Gordon Nicholl, James Pryde, Paul Nash, Philip Connard, Charles Pears, Septimus Scott, Lillian Hocknell – industrial artists hardly. This dichotomy of approach was in fact an accident of its founding when nearly all of its founder members, who used to meet weekly in the Cock Tavern in Fleet Street, were illustrators; and it is more than likely that if one of them, himself an able illustrator, had not been also a fine industrial designer and still

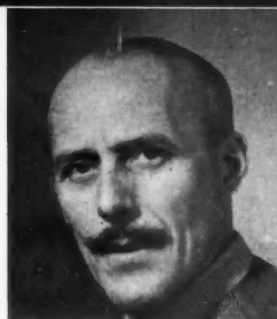
more a man of vision and tenacity, that the Society so founded would have foundered. For the Society as it exists today, robust, professional, select, is almost entirely the work, as it is the conception, of Milner Gray, who was its President during the years of re-formation between 1945-49.

The Society was founded in 1930.\* Two years later, when the original committee was in difficulties, Gray's hand already stole towards the tiller. It was on his insistence that men like Allan Walton, Graham Sutherland and Alec Hunter were invited to strengthen Council, with the result that the Textile Group soon became the most efficient and best organised within the Society – a development hardly foreseen by its illustrator founders. Even so, until the war – which either killed outright or acted as a forcing house for the most unexpected projects – the S I A, while growing steadily, can hardly be said to have achieved the cohesion or prestige at which it aimed. And this is not surprising when one reads, for instance, that manufacturers were asked to *nominate* their designers, and municipal authorities their art masters or education officers, as members of the Society. This invitation "met with a very considerable response": one can only guess what it must have done to the clear-cut policies of the men who were ultimately to emerge as captains and pilots of the post-war Society. It was to be many years yet before the extreme vulgarity of a menu for the 1938 Annual Dinner, before me as I write, gave way to the confidence, wit, urbanity and scholarship of Milner Gray's presidential toast, on a later occasion, before Sir Stafford Cripps, then President of the Board of Trade.

## A revolutionary step

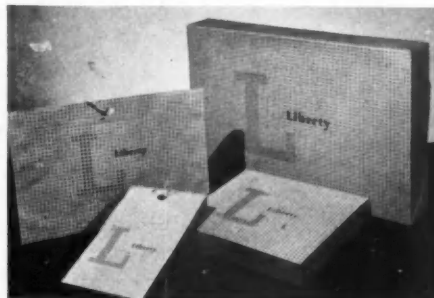
And those years were the years of war: years of undoubted advancement for the whole cause of design. Once again that name, so much concerned with design in this country, saw the chance and seized it. Frank Pick was then Director-General of the Ministry of Information: and in 1940, at the very outset of the war, he set up an Exhibition Branch within the Ministry and invited Milner Gray to be head of it. By this time the S I A, whose offices had suffered in the blitz, had moved to Stoke-on-Trent where it was not able to do much more than preserve such records as remained. But in London, Gray was able to gather round him all the best talent available, to start a London branch of the Society – housed, by kindness of Sir Kenneth Clark, in the National Gallery – which was eventually, of course, to become the tail which wagged the dog. With the end of the war, and the first public showing on a huge scale of the exhibition techniques perfected during it – at the Council of Industrial Design's 'Britain Can Make It' – techniques first demonstrated in this country by the M A R S group in 1938, these designers were in such a strong position that

\* Founder members of the S I A: Sir Herbert Morgan President, R. P. Gossop Honorary Secretary, Oliver Bernard, Harold Forster, Milner Gray, Lillian Hocknell, James Mortzen, Gordon Nichol, Septimus Scott, Harold Stabler, Fred Taylor, Commerford Watson.



Ashley Havinden 1953-54

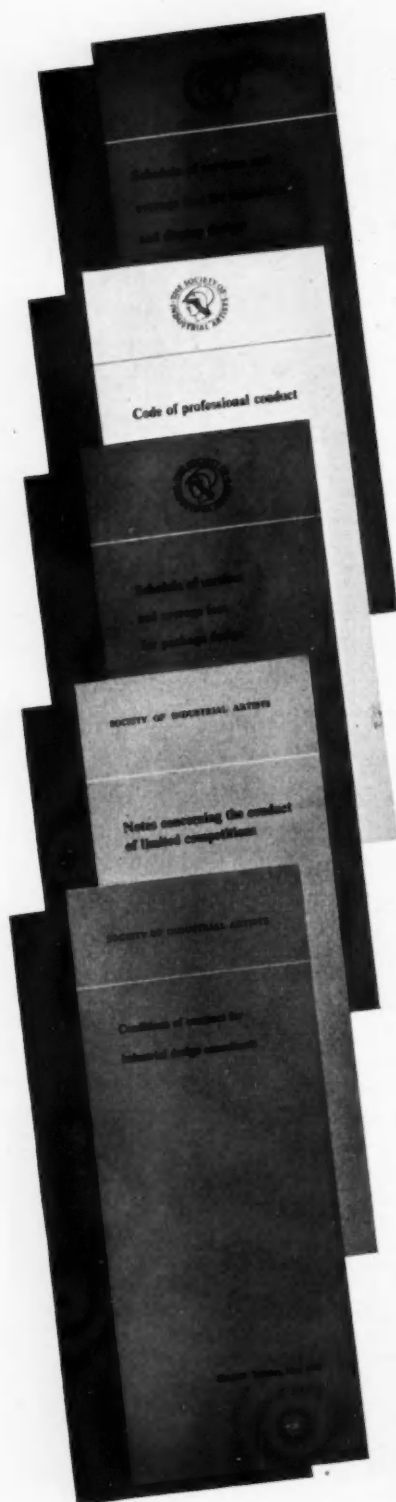
'L' in dark grey stars against a light starred background, with 'Liberty' also in dark grey.



Misha Black 1954-55

Showroom for Kayser-Bondor Ltd.





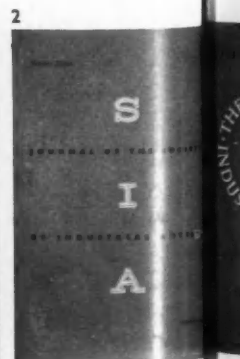
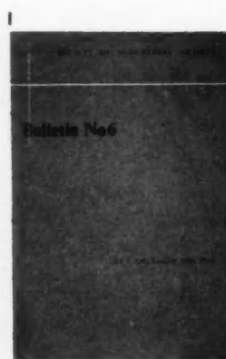
they were able to take the bravest of revolutionary steps on behalf of the Society of Industrial Artists and call on all its members to resign, and, if they so wished, submit themselves for re-election with evidence of the highest technical and aesthetic qualifications before a properly constituted selection committee. The Society could only hope to effect an improvement in design standards if its own standards were above criticism. This pruning, which under wintrier conditions might have killed it, was of course prerequisite for the strong and still expanding growth which we honour today. Membership since then has quadrupled, and is now marshalled in a hierarchy of Fellows, Members, Licentiates and Students. Today the Society can claim to be the one body which not only represents the designer in the social and industrial fabric, but grants him a status according to his achievement and advises and guides him in his professional affairs. It was in 1754 that the Royal Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce was established; it was in 1936 that the Royal Society of Arts instituted its Faculty of Royal Designers for Industry; it is in 1955 that the SIA celebrates its first quarter century. Nearly two hundred years of battle for a new conception of the artist.

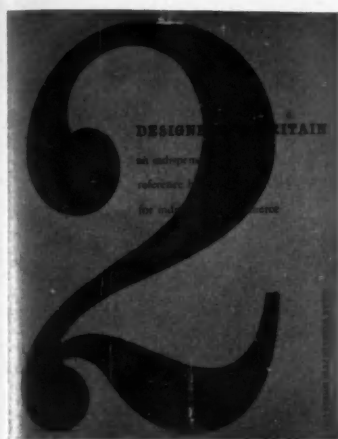
But the Society is not an anonymous amorphous body. Milner Gray, who was President for the all-important years 1945-49, was succeeded by Christian Barman, who was succeeded by a line of presidents of equal distinction whose work and 'profiles' you will see illustrating this article. Today it is happily Misha Black, Misha Black who joined and eventually succeeded Gray at the Exhibition Branch of the wartime M O I, in whose hands, as President, lie this year's silver celebrations. No hands are more capable, or more esteemed, when two or three are gathered together in the name of design.

But how, in a review of this length, to show the work - impartially and comprehensively - of over 1,100 members? All one can do is to refer the reader to the Society's own admirable biennial book 'Designers in Britain' which is divided into the appropriate sections and fully illustrated; and of which the fifth volume, as fascinating as its predecessors, will be published in 1956.

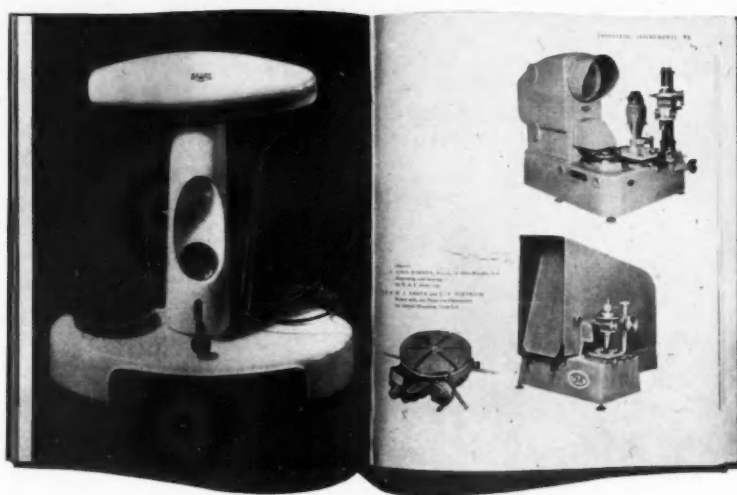
LEFT These publications, containing much valuable information for members, were designed by Peter Ray. The 'Minerva's Head', which appears frequently in SIA publications, was designed by Milner Gray.

RIGHT The 'Bulletin' of the SIA, 1, was soon replaced by the 'Journal'. The covers of publications 1-3 and 5 shown here were the responsibility of editorial boards: 4, 6 and 7 were by Edward Ardizzone, Len Deighton and Christopher Sharpe respectively.

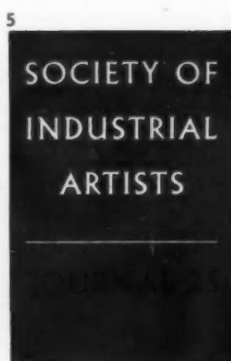
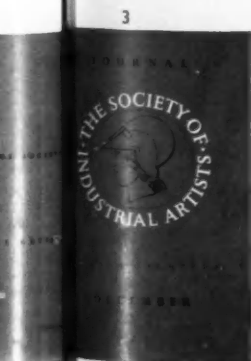
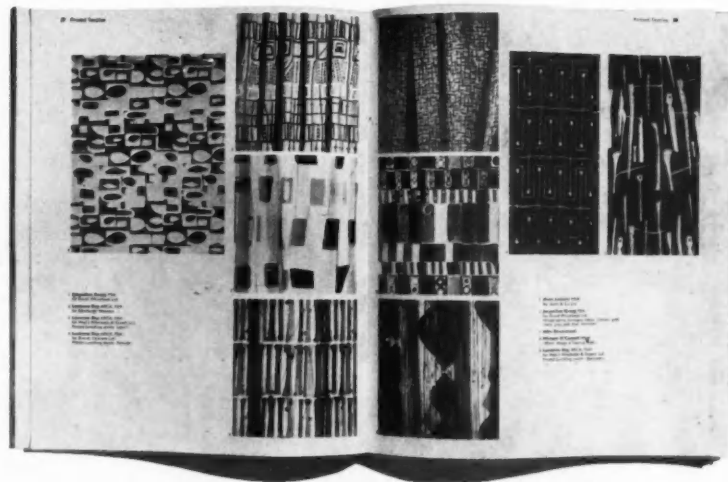




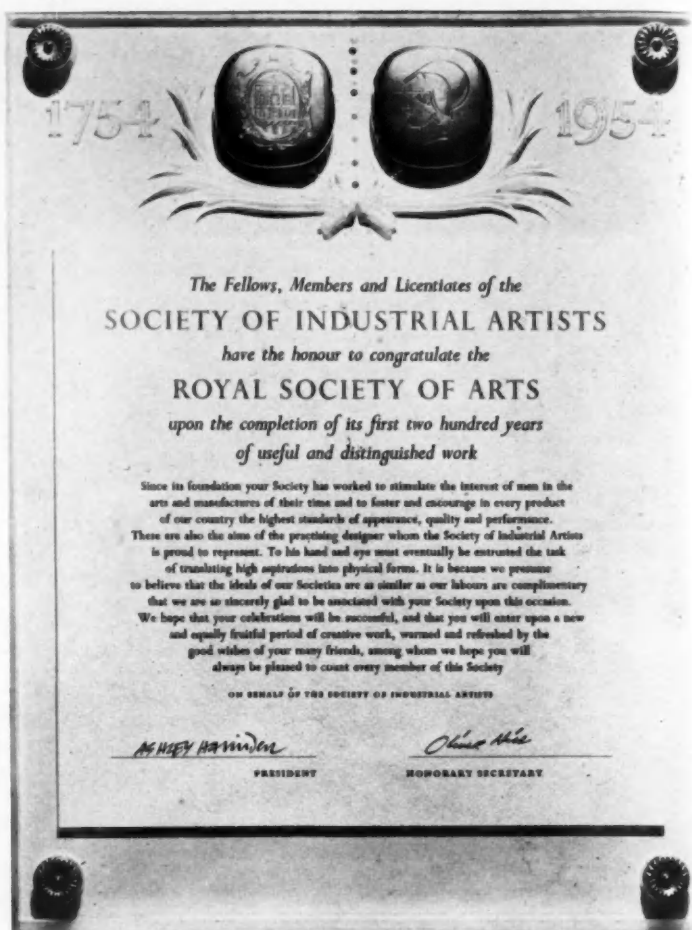
Jackets of the second and fourth volumes of 'Designers in Britain' adapted as publicity leaflets, and designed by Peter Ray and Herbert Spencer respectively.

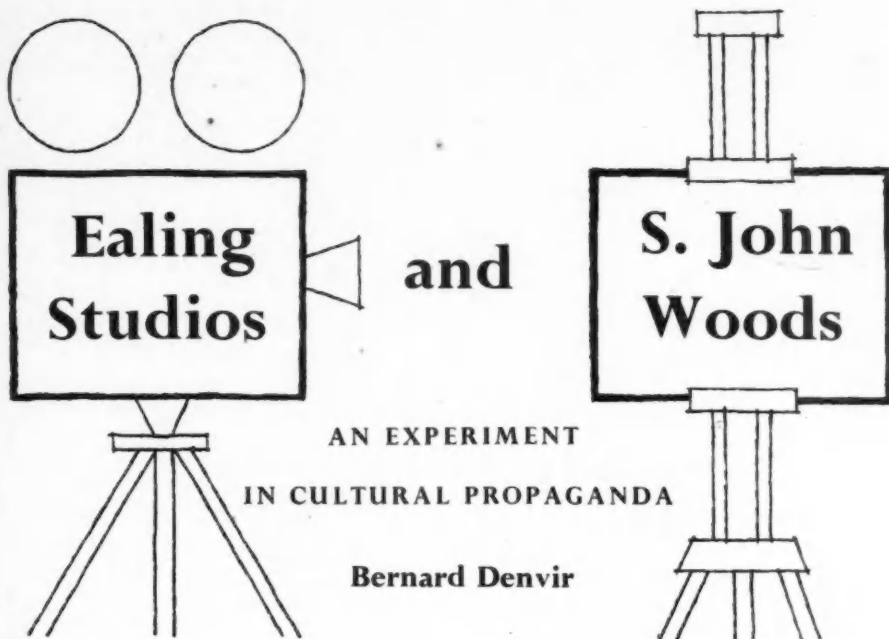


'Spreads' from the second and fourth volumes of 'Designers in Britain'.



BELOW The stationery by Peter Ray and Milner Gray is superseded by Desmond Wyeth's design, bottom, adopted this year.





EARLIER THIS YEAR an announcement from Ealing Studios marked the end of one of the most exciting and successful chapters in the history of British poster art. The Studios were to cease producing their advertising material under the direction of S. John Woods, the company's own advertising director.

What lasting results have been produced by the 12 years of innovation and experiment since Sir Michael Balcon appointed S. John Woods to be a kind of 'Controller of the Printed Word and Image' to the organisation?

M. Jean Cocteau, the latest and most *terrible* addition to the French Academy, recently described, in an article in the French paper 'Arts', the efforts of poster artists as "le théâtre de la rue". In so doing he suggested the close and intimate connection which has always existed between the world of the poster and the world of the theatre. Even in antiquity there were posters which announced forthcoming attractions of gladiatorial combats, and Pliny has preserved for us the name of one of the first poster artists, Calludes.

One would have expected therefore that the appearance of the cinema on the European scene might have produced a form of poster art in keeping with all the cultural and economic implications of the new medium, and geared to humanity's first experience of mass-produced entertainment. The 'little' cinema alone has consistently experimented with new publicity

approaches. The mammoth producers and distributors have been alarmingly coy, even reactionary, and their influence has spread to areas - France and Italy for instance - where one would have expected an approach in harmony with the visual idioms of our own century. It is only by the most heroic efforts that one can reluctantly persuade oneself that the more garish of the usual run of film posters possess the curious charm of rather inept urban folk-art. That this is due to some curious kind of blindness rather than to embattled reaction is suggested by the fact that not at their moments of lushest over-expenditure have they employed even an artist of academic distinction. No latter day Landseer depicted the charms of 'Lassie' and the posthumous services of Sir Alma Taddema were not summoned to add further appeal to 'Quo Vadis'.

When therefore some 12 years ago S. John Woods was invited by Sir Michael Balcon - who has always had a keen sense of visual elegance - to take over the directorship of the Ealing advertising, he was venturing on what was virtually new ground. Even his own previous experience had been confined to work on a much smaller scale. As art director of the advertising side of a fairly large film company he had to deal with the production of posters in terms of tens of thousands, and also with a vast quantity of other printed matter. For, and this is important, he was in control of every printed medium used by the organisation in its contacts with



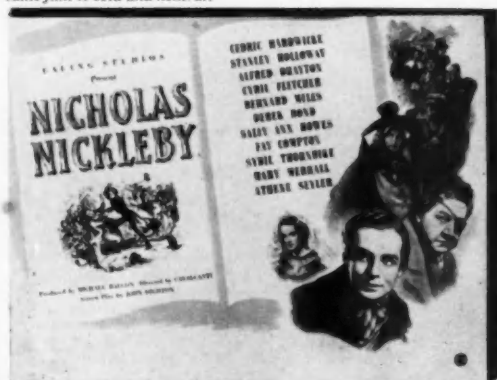
*A hilarious study in the gentle art of MURDER*

Designed by James Fitton for S. John Woods (Ealing). Photographic montage combines with a painting to meet the need for the personality 'close up'.

Designed by Edward Ardizzone for S. John Woods (Ealing), conveying the bustling, but vital film of the Dickens' novel.



BELOW Produced by General Film Distributors, this poster for the same film is cold and neutral.



Would YOU say the words she longs to hear?



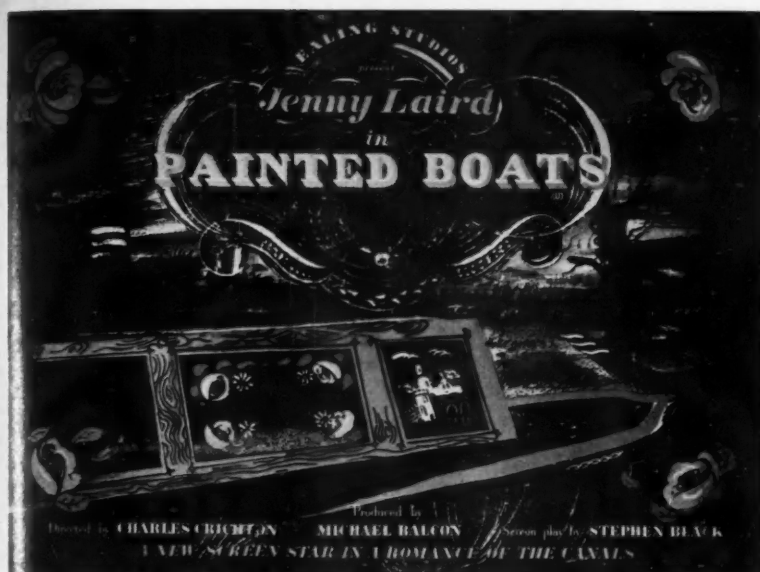
**I BELIEVE  
IN YOU**

Designed by S. John Woods (Ealing). It successfully simulates the effect of the cinema itself.

the general public. It is not always realised that the proper job of an art director of this kind involves not only advertising in its more generally accepted sense but what might be called 'visual public relations'. If a house style is to be effective, it must run continuously through letter headings and memorandum sheets as well as through bills, posters and publicity leaflets. It must be the visual trademark of the organisation.

The problems which face the planner of poster publicity for the cinema are very different from those which face his counterpart in the theatre. The most obvious, though not the most pressing, is that he has to face distribution on a national and sometimes even international scale. Careful printing (Graphic Reproductions did the printing; W. F. Sedgwick made the blocks; the Shenval Press did the letterpress), skilful handling of techniques, sometimes even combining them, can ensure, as they did with the Ealing material, uniform standards of reproductive excellence.

The more complex problems are those directly concerned with the nature of a cinema, its highly specialised relationships with the public, and the economic and administrative framework within which it operates. In the first place the publicity of a film company is not so much concerned with propounding the merits of that company's productions as with persuading the public to see a certain film. It cannot therefore rely on shock tactics, nor can it find an excuse for commissioning creative art work on the grounds of prestige. In conveying quickly, though of course not



Designed by John Piper for S. John Woods (Ealing). This and other Ealing posters will be included in the 'Art in British Advertising' exhibition, R B A Galleries, London, opening in November.



American poster for 'Painted Boats', with the title 'The Girl of the Canal'.

instantly, the atmosphere of a film the creative 'modern' artists commissioned by S. John Woods were singularly successful.

This point is remarkably well brought out by a comparison between two posters for the film 'Nicholas Nickleby', the one produced for General Film Distributors; the other designed by Edward Ardizzone for S. John Woods. The one conveys nothing of the story and little of the atmosphere, beyond the fact that the film has been made from a book. It misses entirely the slightly vulgar and infinitely vital quality of Dickens' work, and conveys, with what in certain circles is known as 'dignity', the idea of 'a great classic'. The sense of incident, of overwhelming vitality, of life and colour is put across with complete success in Ardizzone's bustling colourful scene. The other seems cold and neutral, though it is interesting to note that the main lettering is identical in both works.

The poster artist who limits himself to the normal style of cinema advertising can never do much more than juggle with certain figures in relationship to each other, against some kind of scenic background. Yet imaginative freedom and enterprise of the kind which skilful direction and the use of the right artist alone can command, are essential. Films are, after all, usually directed and produced by people of some intellectual vigour, and it is essential that the publicity artist should be able to reflect some of that quality. And it would be a mistake to think that it can be captured only by the use of a 'fine art' medium.

S. John Woods' own poster for 'I Believe in You', for instance, not only used fine photography, but used it in such a way as to simulate the actual effect of the cinema itself – the sense of contrasting black and white, light and shade, close-up and the enlarged screen. Film publicity today is based almost entirely on the personality cult, a fact which may legitimately be deplored, but which has to be accepted. Very much the same problems arise therefore as those which a portrait painter has to face. The extent to which these can be overcome however is suggested by James Fitton's design for 'Kind Hearts and Coronets' in which photographic montage is incorporated into an overall painterly pattern.

The reconciliation of the varying approaches of commercial advertising and fine art is always a difficult one. In the days of Toulouse-Lautrec individual portraiture had not yet lost cultural caste. Patron, artist and public were close together. The 'Moulin de la Galette' bore the same relationship to the cinema that Lorenzo de Medici bears to Henry Ford. Without a tradition, without even a recognisable technique, the cinema poster has floundered weakly through the lesser traditions of magazine illustration. And yet at any given moment there are probably more cinema posters on view than there are posters of any other kind.

The Ealing experiment has come to an untimely end. It is yet to be seen whether the new ideas which it propounded, the new techniques of persuasion it evolved will have any effect on 'le théâtre de la rue'.

1 An early photograph showing something of the ornate grandeur produced in the great age of hotel building, which has often become tawdry through neglect.

2 A misguided attempt to regain the original glitter and pomp of early hotels by the tasteless introduction of curly ironwork and chromium plate – the essence of the 'hotel eclectic' style.



Photo: 'Hotel and Catering Review'



3 The Westbury, London – a new hotel deliberately designed in the 'hotel eclectic' style to reproduce an atmosphere which in itself has evolved through an accumulation of unrelated elements.



Photo: 'Picture Post'

## Hotel Eclectic

These pictures briefly illustrate the evolution of the 'hotel eclectic' style. The new Leofric and the redesigned Royal Hotel at Cardiff, below, show that it is far from being a necessary part of the hotel atmosphere.

4 and 5 The Royal Hotel, Cardiff – an example of how the gloom of many old hotels can be changed into something modern, clean and bright – without recourse to the spurious glamour of the 'American bar'.



# LEOFRIC shatters a myth

John E. Blake

A FEW MONTHS AGO there was an explosion at Coventry. It was not a large explosion such as we read about in the papers, yet its significance was profound and far reaching. For this was no bomb that was exploded but a myth; a myth which it seemed had become firmly rooted in the English character. The occasion was the opening of the new hotel Leofric, named after Leofric, Earl of Mercia and husband to Lady Godiva; the myth, a belief in the necessity for a type of design for hotel interiors which for the want of a better term we might call 'hotel eclectic'.

'Hotel eclectic' is difficult to define, yet it is always immediately recognisable. Its origins are in the nineteenth century, in the great age of hotel building, when the rapid growth of the railways made travel for the first time quick, cheap and easy. The ornate grandeur of the hotels of the period, designed presumably to satisfy and flatter the aspirations of a *nouveau riche* class, has become the hallmark of the British hotel industry. Comparatively few hotels have been built since then, but the intervening years have witnessed a vain struggle to maintain the original standards. The grand has become gloomy, the rich tawdry. The introduction of nondescript furniture, carpets and fabrics, genteel light fittings, and a universal application of cream paint have accelerated this process. Misguided attempts to regain something of the original pomp and glitter have been made with curly ironwork, jazzy murals, chromium plate and mirror glass – all the spurious characteristics of the so-called 'American bar'.

The result is a conglomeration of unrelated elements which can be seen in varying strengths and proportions in any major town up and down the country. This in fact is 'hotel eclectic'. So used are we now to its ubiquitous presence that we are tempted to regard it as a fundamental and unavoidable part of the hotel atmosphere. This certainly seems to be the case with a number of hotel managements, for we all know of cases of 'modernised' bars, restaurants and lounges in which this atmosphere is deliberately maintained. But when the 'hotel eclectic' style is considered to be of such



6 The Leofric ballroom, shown here laid out for a banquet. Red plastic sheeting on the gallery walls, and lampshades to match, provide the dominant colour note. Bookings for a year ahead were received before the hotel was opened.

importance that it is adopted in a completely new hotel, then the problem becomes infinitely more serious. The Westbury in London is a case in point. As our only large post-war hotel, at the time it was opened, it came as a depressing confirmation that the myth was still firmly established.

Against this background, the triumph of the Leofric in shattering the myth can be more readily understood, for there is no doubt that its standards of design and of service represent a tremendous advance on anything of a comparable nature in Great Britain. We may feel that the building of such a hotel is long overdue, or that there are parts which are not entirely successful – the Precinct Snack Bar for example suffers from an apparent enthusiasm for all the known elements of modern design. But considered in terms of the general result, such criticisms become little more than 'niggles'. Fundamentally the Leofric's achievement lies in its uncompromisingly modern treatment which, but for minor exceptions, is carried through with consistency and imagination. The designers' energies have not flagged after the entrance foyer and public rooms, but are apparent in the remotest corners and smallest details. It is imposing – in its scale, its layout and its amenities – without being grandiose; it is rich – in the choice of materials, colour and finish – without

being showy. It is certainly a hotel of which we can be proud.

How have these results been achieved? There are broadly three reasons, the first of which concerns the hotel's situation. Built for Ind Coope and Allsopp, Ltd, one of the 'big five' national brewers, the hotel has been erected in the heart of Coventry's new city centre, where clean modern buildings are rising to replace the devastation of the war. Though the external appearance of the building was to a large extent controlled by the city plan, Ind Coope had complete freedom in the design of the interiors and conceivably could have chosen Jacobean or insisted, like the Westbury, on 'eclectic'. But the all-pervading atmosphere of modern design in Coventry was a powerful and stimulating influence and the company's directors wisely decided that any other approach would have been inconceivable.

Secondly the Ind Coope director in charge of operations at the Leofric, Neville Thompson, had travelled extensively in Europe, the U S A and Africa during the previous two years, and had had an opportunity to study at first hand a number of the most modern hotels abroad. Much of the information gained in this way was put to good use in the Leofric. The final but by no means the least important of reasons for the Leofric's success was the ability of the Ind

## The Leofric: public areas



7 Reception desk. Teak panelling gives a feeling of warmth and richness and shows how effective this simple use of good materials can be. The rack for light luggage is an example of the detailed consideration given to customers' requirements.

8 Residents' lounge. A quiet restraint makes it perhaps the most successful of the public rooms in which the dark and light chair coverings provide the right amount of variety for the eye.



Coope architect's department, responsible for the interior design of the hotel, to seize and make the best use of the magnificent opportunity with which it was presented.

The Leofric has provided a challenge to the British hotel industry which the demands of those who stay there will make more vocal and more urgent. Gilbert Harding, that outspoken radio personality, has said that "No American hotel I ever saw can improve on the Leofric". Many of the business men who visit the neighbouring manufacturing towns and who now prefer to make the journey to Coventry are not likely to disagree. For it is in the major industrial centres of the Midlands and the North where improvements in hotel accommodation are most required, and it is against this background that the Leofric stands out in such marked contrast. Had it been built in London it would have attracted less notice and consequently would have provided less of a stimulus to the hotel industry generally. Its existence was made possible because of the enlightened attitude of the Ind Coope management whose approach in this matter, and in the re-designed Royal Hotel at Cardiff, suggests an important new design policy for hotels. Its success also proves that there is a wealth of design talent in the country waiting to be used.

9 The most striking characteristic of the French Restaurant is the lighting. Rows of small bulbs partially recessed in the ceiling are reflected in the cutlery and glassware giving a fairy tale sparkle to the table settings which only the purist could fail to find exciting. The full effect is not revealed in the photograph.



10 The designers have set out to give a feeling of richness in the bars and dining rooms with results that sometimes appear over-emphatic. In the Silver Grill, shown here, the different floor levels, variety of ceiling and wall treatments, and out-of-the-way corners, reveal a determination to leave no stones of modern design unturned. The choice of furniture, carpet, light fittings and tableware is however excellent.





11

## The Leofric: bedrooms

**11** The bedrooms represent perhaps the most important achievement of the Leofric. It is from here that residents will carry away their most memorable impressions, yet it is here that considerations of appearance, comfort and convenience are most often ignored. The elegant writing desk/dressing table unit, designed by Ward & Austin, is one of the more interesting features. The bedside wall is covered with 'Vynide' leathercloth, a material used extensively in the hotel. **12** Of the 108

bedrooms, 70 per cent have their own bathroom like this. The wall above the bath is covered by 'Vitrolite' glass panels. Choice of fittings is excellent. **13** Bedside cabinets incorporate a panel with switches for all lights, a call button, and radio controls. The cabinet is made of mahogany with a leathercloth front panel. **14** This detail of the folding mirrors shows the fine detailing of the dressing table units. The black leather-covered outside surface has the Leofric symbol in gold.

**DESIGNERS, MANUFACTURERS and CONTRACTORS** whose work for the Leofric is shown in this article

**Architects:** W. S. Hattrell & Partners

**Interior Design:** Architect's Department, Inel Coope & Allsopp Ltd

**Light fittings and electrical installations:** Troughton & Young Ltd

The numerals in the following credits refer to the illustration numbers.

**6** Ballroom: CARPET designer Ronald Grierson, maker S. J. Stockwell (Carpets) Ltd (see also 7, 8, 9 and 10). CHAIRS designer Robin Day, maker Kingfisher Ltd. CUTLERY maker Mappin & Webb. TABLE GLASS maker Stevens & Williams Ltd. POTTERY designer Sheila Stratton, maker Mintons Ltd. TABLE LINEN maker Broadway Damask Co Ltd. CONTRACTORS Health Contracts Ltd, Peters Contracts (ceiling), 'Vynide' balcony WALL COVERING.

**7** Reception: CONTRACTORS Harris & Sheldon Ltd.

**8** Lounge: CHAIRS designer Ward & Austin, maker Buoyant Upholstery Co Ltd (also 11). CHAIR COVERING designer Tibor Reich, maker Tibor Ltd. CURTAIN FABRIC maker Edinburgh Weavers. OCCASIONAL TABLES designer R. L. G. Carter, maker Ian Audsley, 'Waverite' tops, CONTRACTORS Harris & Sheldon Ltd.

**9** French Restaurant: CHAIRS designers Tom Lupton and John Morton, maker L M Furniture Ltd.

**10** Silver Grill: CHAIRS designers Tom Lupton and John Morton, maker L M Furniture Ltd. TILES maker Purbeck Decorative Tile Co Ltd. CLOCK maker International Business Machines U K Ltd. GAS FIRED SILVER GRILL Benham & Sons Ltd. CONTRACTORS Harris & Sheldon Ltd.

**11** Bedroom: DRESSING TABLE designer Ward & Austin, maker Loughborough Cabinet Manufacturing Co Ltd, 'Formica' top. OCCASIONAL TABLE designer R. L. G. Carter, maker Loughborough Cabinet Manufacturing Co Ltd. CARPET maker T. F. Firth & Co Ltd. CURTAINS designer Lucienne Day, maker Heal & Son Ltd. BEDSPREAD maker Everwear Candlewick Ltd. MATTRESS maker Dunlopillo. UPRIGHT CHAIR designer Ward & Austin, maker Buoyant Upholstery Co Ltd.

**12** Bathroom: WASHBASIN and BIDET with fittings maker Shanks & Co Ltd. 'Vitrolite' PANNELLING above bath. PLASTIC CURTAINS John Anslow Ltd.

**13** Bedroom: BED and BEDSIDE CABINET designer Ward & Austin, maker Loughborough Cabinet Manufacturing Co Ltd, 'Formica' top. RADIO maker Trix Electrical Co Ltd.

**14** Bedroom: Leofric SYMBOL on folding mirror designer Sheila Stratton.

12



13



14



1 A new look in office cabinets. Harmonising with either the L-shaped desk or this one (originally designed by Dennis Lennon for use in Southern Rhodesia) are these long low storage cabinets, with leather covered, brass trimmed doors that drop down. The wastepaper bin and even the desk lamp carry on the leather and brass motif.

2 The director's L-shaped desk was specially designed by Dennis Lennon for Peter Jones. The lamp and generous storage space are built in, and there are ledges for a dictating machine and, beneath the top of the desk, for papers. Also by Lennon are the armchair, and the low unit tables with brass legs (like the desk), and marble tops.



## Showroom for office furniture

PETER JONES is the first retail store to open a department for modern office furniture, but Mrs Halifax, who was responsible for the idea, thinks others may follow suit. For it is difficult to find suitable furniture for the new office blocks now going up, and architects do not always want to design special furniture themselves. Nor are managing directors always able to approve or disapprove a design which they have seen only on the drawing board. Hence the need for a showroom where modern office furniture can be seen, handled, and ordered without delay - as opposed to a contracts department.

Hitherto the choice in 'off-the-peg' office furniture for the executive has largely been confined to mahogany boxes on legs, favoured by the office furniture shops and sold at prices that may reflect their solidity, but scarcely any well considered design. The only alternative was standardised metal equipment, which is not the answer for any firm seeking individuality, especially

in managerial offices. Peter Jones saw the need for something different.

They began by commissioning Dennis Lennon to design an exclusive suite of office furniture, even including details such as lamps and filing trays, in keeping with the larger pieces of furniture. This forms the core of the new department; but they also have other pieces by their own designer, Cherna Schotz, and some other mass-produced pieces by Terence Conran, Robin Day, John Boissevain and various Continental designers. A feature of the Lennon suite (to be found also among the Conran designs) is the storage unit, rather like a sideboard in shape: the long low cabinet, with its top for periodicals, etc, and its drop-front doors, produces a harmonious effect. The large L-shaped desk has gone some way to building in the odds and ends that usually clutter a desk top. The desk and chair legs are brass-spatted, with wood surfaces made resistant to heat and stains.

ELIZABETH GUNDREY

## ▷ before and after ◁

Both the earlier models by Rolls, 1, and Remington, 2, had a two-piece hair trap, whose parts were held together by a fussy spring.



3 The fine detailing of the semi-rectangular 'Viceroy' by Rolls Razor Ltd is shown in the lettering and the switch, which is now in red instead of in black, and bears the firm's emblem. The angled head is a simple way of making shaving easier. A more comfortable grip than the one shown is obtained by holding the razor with the thumb just below the switch, and the fingers on the opposite side.



4 The detailing of the Remington 'Super 60' above, is a great improvement on the earlier model, left. A variety of hand grips can be used on the latest instrument.

# Shaving in comfort

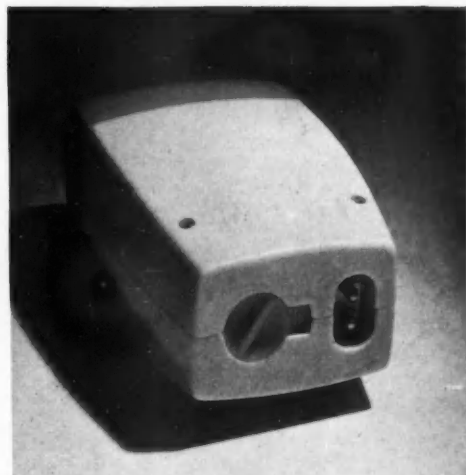
*Case histories of two razors before and after redesign*

THE WAY YOU SHAVE, as much as the value of good appearance and technical efficiency, will influence your opinion of these four razors by Rolls Razor Ltd and Remington Rand Ltd. In both cases the firms have altered their earlier models, and it is instructive to observe the improvements.

The 'Viceroy V-Ten', the latest model by Rolls, has been fundamentally redesigned by A. B. Kirkbride. Its main feature is the angled head which makes shaving easier, while the gap between the teeth in the head has been increased to 14,000th inch to give a closer shave. The new model also has a stronger motor, which it is claimed doubles the number of cutting strokes per second, the 'hair trap' is easier to put on and off, and the head guard is larger and more efficient. From the point of view of appearance the new razor is again a great improvement. Shorter and altogether more solid, the main body owes its strength to the fact that it is compression moulded. The voltage dial, which was formerly a little black nut controlled with a sixpenny bit or a thumb nail, is now a smooth red switch on the base. And the retailer will appreciate the display value of a razor with a flat base. The customer's opinion will also depend on how he holds his razor when shaving. If he grips it firmly like a dagger the square corners and wider circumference of the new model make it less comfortable to hold, and he will prefer the older model, which is a tapered instrument and nestles snugly in the palm. But if he holds his razor more delicately between thumb and fingers, he will prefer the 'Viceroy V-Ten'.

Comparison between the Remington 'Super 60' and Remington's earlier 'Contour 6' also shows some remarkable improvements. The head is now contoured to suit the face, the cutters are spring loaded, and the motor is both more powerful and quieter in action. The shape of the 'Super 60' (derived from the 'Remington 60', an intermediate model not shown) is radically different from that of the 'Contour 6', and here again the new model is far in advance of its predecessor. The detailing is more workmanlike, and the inset panel which aids the grip has a more satisfying 'feel'. The new model is especially comfortable to hold when shaving, and compares favourably with the sharp corners of Rolls 'Viceroy V-Ten', though its grey colour is perhaps less attractive than the red used in the Rolls model.

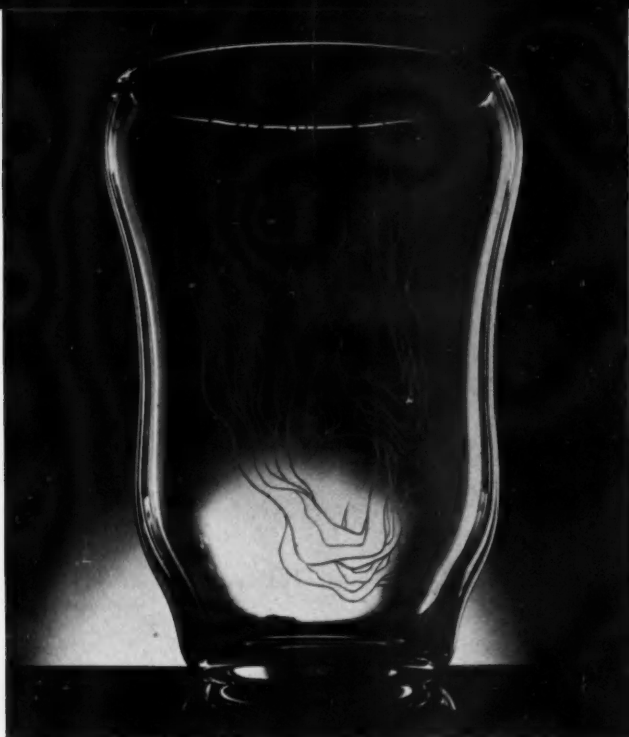
R.R.



5 The voltage control switch in red now seems visually and mechanically part of the instrument, whereas on the earlier 'Viceroy', it had been an apparently flimsy nut.



6 The head guard of transparent polystyrene protects the teeth of the razor, and the mushroom coloured 'hair trap' of high impact polystyrene slips on and off more easily than the previous 'hair trap', which was black.



## Drawing in glass

THE EXHIBITION of Steuben Glass Inc to be held at Park Lane House, 45 Park Lane, from October 14–November 9 will give European connoisseurs of glass an opportunity to see some of the best 'art glass' in the world. The Steuben studios and glasshouse were founded by Arthur Amory Houghton Jr, great-grandson of Amory Houghton who founded the Corning Glass Works, and this is the first big exhibition of American glass to be held in this country since Steuben glass was shown at the Fine Art Society's galleries 20 years ago. This glass cannot be bought in England owing to the ban on the import of luxury goods from the dollar area, and the purpose of the exhibition is not commercial; the proceeds will go to the Educational Fund of the English-Speaking Union of the Commonwealth. Its object is rather to present "an exclusively American art form" to the British. Despite this intention, some of the pieces have been created from designs by a number of well known European artists, examples of whose work are illustrated here. The drawing is in many cases extremely sensitive, and in general seeks to exploit the shape of the glass, making full use of its three dimensions.

1 A large bowl, bearing a design of mystical import by Jean Cocteau.

2 An ingenious representation of acrobats following the shape of the vessel. 'Aerialists' was designed by Bruce Moore, an American sculptor.

3 Spikey and a trifle impertinent is this uncomfortably cooped up mantis, drawn by Graham Sutherland for a pear-shaped vase blown of clear crystal.

4 The three dimensional quality suitable to glass is exploited in this design for engraving by Sir Jacob Epstein. The vessel's depth is enhanced and its ample form repeated in the sensual lips and fingers of the drawing.





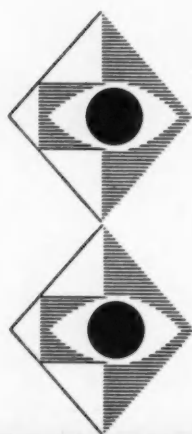
## Introduction to **THE DESIGN CENTRE**

TO BE SEEN AT  
THE DESIGN CENTRE

Building fittings  
Cooking equipment  
Domestic appliances  
Floor coverings  
Furnishing fabrics  
Furniture  
Hardware  
Heating appliances  
Lighting fittings  
Office equipment  
Radio and TV receivers  
Street furniture  
Tableware  
Travel goods  
Wallpaper

*Next spring in the heart of London an exhibition of well designed goods will be opened by the CoID. An area of nearly 8,000 sq ft will contain a permanent but constantly changing display of well designed British durable consumer goods. This will be The Design Centre for British Industries; the first continuous and selective exhibition in the world to be sponsored on this scale by government. At 28 Haymarket the Centre will be a permanent guide to good designs in current production, enabling buyers to keep abreast of current British trends. Manufacturers will enjoy a new type of promotion because the exhibition of their products at the Centre will emphasise a merit in design and making that will be a recommendation to discerning buyers. The public should welcome the Centre as a place in which to obtain practical guidance before shopping. Full information will be given about the products on display.*

Hans Schleger photographed in his studio by Sam Lambert.



## THE SYMBOL for The Design Centre

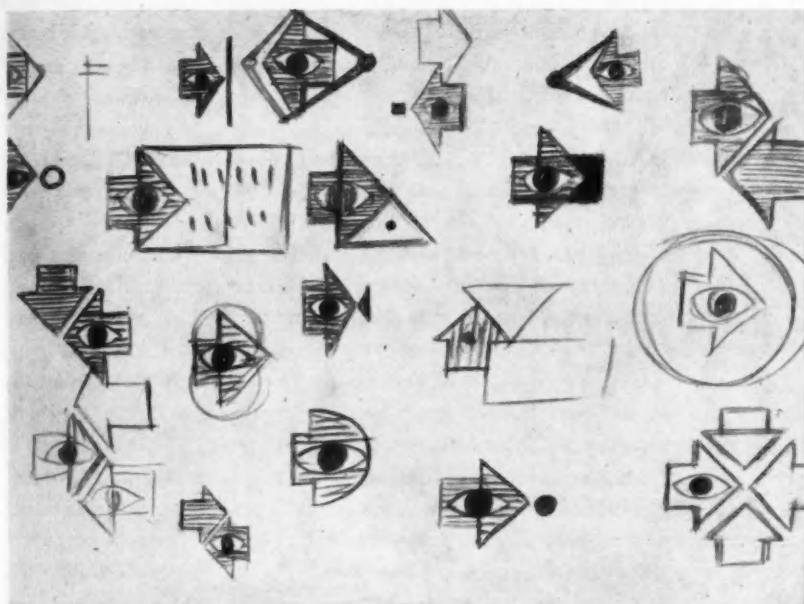


### THE PROBLEM AND HOW IT WAS TACKLED BY HANS SCHLEGER

*Apart from the Royal Arms which are associated with all the activities of the Council of Industrial Design, a symbol was needed for The Design Centre for British Industries. The CoID required a housemark that unified its publicity for the Centre. There were four main requirements; the symbol should evoke quickly an association with The Design Centre and express the concept of quality and selection at a focal point. Furthermore the symbol had to be suitable for reproduction in black and white, colour, relief, in the round (possibly as a standing feature) and in display lighting. For all these purposes it had to be designed for use in varying sizes.*

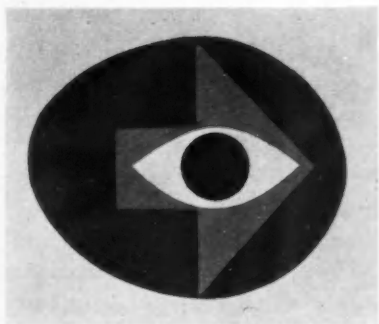
*The CoID commissioned Hans Schleger to design the symbol. After much preliminary experiment the solution which has been adopted to meet the many requirements is essentially simple; the design has about it that rare quality of inevitability. Mr Schleger built his symbol out of those basic shapes which have been and always will be at the designer's disposal; circle, square and triangle. They incorporate the eye both as the focal point and as the human element of discernment.*

*A good symbol, like this one, is a condensed message without words which should be universally understandable. As such it will serve to express The Design Centre on posters, in advertising and for all types of press publicity. It will also be featured on prospectuses – like the one attached to this page – brochures and notepaper. In all it does it will form the key element of the house style for The Design Centre.*

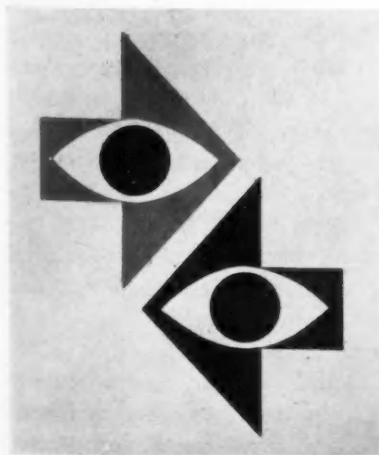


*Some of the many rough sketches made by Hans Schleger when developing the symbol.*

### The Symbol's Development



*Following the rough sketches above, the designer made several more finished versions. The four examples here illustrate his concern to prevent one of the basic elements, the triangle, from becoming a directional arrow. The final result, on this month's cover and on pages 31 and 32, shows how this requirement has been met by deceptively simple means.*





## How the

## EXHIBITS

## for The Design Centre will be chosen

THE FACT THAT The Design Centre of British Industries will be a *selective* exhibition of durable consumer goods in current production that reach a high standard of design, poses two important questions to which manufacturers will expect straight answers: *On what basis is the choice made?* and *Who makes it?*

It will not be the first time that the Council of Industrial Design has faced these questions. Every exhibition with which it has been associated since 'Britain Can Make It' in 1946 has been selective. In 1951 the Council was made responsible for choosing the 10,000 manufactured exhibits in the six official Festival of Britain exhibitions. The procedure then adopted was generally recognised as fair and efficient and went a long way to winning industry to the idea of independent selection.

The three stages of selection adopted for the Festival will be broadly applied for The Design Centre. First an appeal to manufacturers to submit those designs of which they are most proud; second a review of these submissions by a selection committee, the accepted items being included in 'Design Review', the Council's permanent illustrated record of good designs in current production; third, selection from 'Design Review' of the goods to be exhibited. For the Festival of Britain this third stage was in the hands of the various designers of the individual pavilions. For The Design Centre it will be the Council's own responsibility.

This procedure means that in order to be considered for exhibition in The Design Centre a product must first be accepted for 'Design Review'. So what are the criteria for acceptance into 'Design Review'?

These were stated in the Council's Annual Report for 1953-54:

*"Though rules of thumb and narrow definitions are neither feasible nor desirable, the general principle can be stated that the object of the Council's selections is to promote good design as comprising good materials and workmanship, fitness for purpose and pleasure in use. These attributes can often apply as well to a traditional design as to a modern one and it is well known that Britain has won a world-wide reputation for her traditional designs; but this reputation could not have been won had earlier generations not had the courage to experiment. . . . Therefore, while accepting the claims of many traditional designs that still measure up to today's requirements from the point of view of the user and of the maker, the bias of the Council's propaganda has always been towards encouraging fresh thought and design in both the old craft-based and the new technical industries, whether the inspiration for a good design is original and contemporary or basically traditional."*

In other words, the Council must take a wide and catholic view of good design, must not narrowly sponsor particular idioms or styles, but must yet not lose sight of its main duty to encourage fresh thinking on design – not an easy problem for any panel of selectors.

The Council has given a great deal of thought to the composition of the 'Design Review' Selection Committee. Two principles seemed important: first, continuity of judgment, and second, responsibility



### **Design Review Selection Committee**

*Sir Gordon Russell*  
(Chairman)

Council members  
(attending by rota):

*Sir Colin Anderson*

*Mr George Breeze*

*Mr J. Cleveland Belle*

*Mr Misha Black*

*Mr Geoffrey Dunn*

*Professor R. Y. Goodden*

*Mr Michael Hope*

*Mr W. Johnstone*

*Mr Osbert Lancaster*

*Mr J. M. Richards*

*The Lady Sempill*

*Mrs Alison Settle*

*Mr W. J. Worboys (ex officio)*

Independent members:

*Professor Wyndham Goodden*

(craft-based industries adviser)

*Mr Jack Howe*

(light engineering

industries adviser)

Staff members:

*Major General J. M. Benoy*

(Deputy Chairman)

*Mr P. I. Fellows*

*Mr Alister Maynard*

*Mr A. Gardner-Medwin*

*Mr Paul Reilly*

*Miss Jean Stewart*

*Mrs C. G. Tomrley*

*Mr G. Williams*

towards manufacturers whose articles are accepted or rejected. These pointed to membership of the Committee by the senior staff of the Council who can attend regularly and at the same time act as interpreters of the Committee's views to industry. But although the staff of the Council are recruited for their interest in design and their knowledge of industry, they could not be expected to carry the whole responsibility for selection. Further strengthening of the Committee was required.

This has been done by the appointment of a panel of Members of the Council, each with a specialised knowledge of design problems, who attend the weekly meetings by rotation; and by the appointment of two outside advisers, one attending when products from the craft-based industries are under review, the other when products of the engineering industries come up.

The average strength of the Selection Committee is thus 10, which is the maximum manageable number if the quantity of submissions – currently about 120 a week – can be reviewed in the time available. The procedure at the Committee is that the Council's industrial officer covering the particular industry to which the submission belongs presents it to the Committee either in sample or photograph supported by his personal knowledge of the product and by such information as the manufacturer has provided; if the Committee feel unable to judge from a photograph the item is deferred for viewing.

The Director of the Council, Sir Gordon Russell, personally reconsiders at a second viewing all items that have been rejected and consults the Committee again if he thinks fit. Manufacturers are given the reasons for rejection by the industrial officers concerned with their trades, and firms may in turn ask for the decision to be reviewed or can submit a fresh or amended version of the rejected item.

Finally, to ensure the technical efficiency and standards of manufacture of items accepted by the Committee, nearly all industries represented in 'Design Review' have been invited to appoint a panel or representative to examine the acceptances. A technical opinion by these recognised authorities in the various trades is necessary before acceptance is complete.

Selection of articles from 'Design Review' for actual exhibition in The Design Centre will be governed by many factors – the design of the exhibition, the space available for particular industries, the standard of design in an industry, the co-operation of the manufacturers, etc – but the same selection committee will be responsible for this choice as for acceptance into 'Design Review'. Members of the Committee will preview all items chosen for exhibition in The Design Centre as they do already for the many overseas prestige exhibitions with which the Council has been concerned.

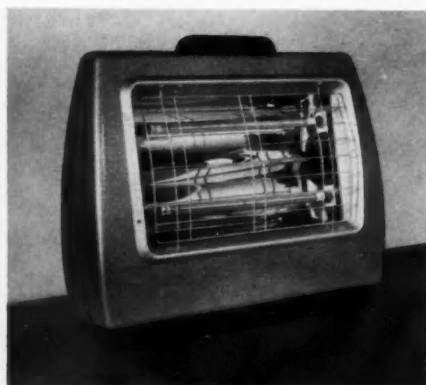
Every acceptance for 'Design Review' is subject to reconsideration after 12 months. This annual review not only ensures that all records are up to date but also enables the Committee to assess and revise, if necessary, its standards of acceptance.

# Review of current design

The items shown have recently been accepted for inclusion in 'Design Review', the illustrated record of current British products, to be seen at the headquarters of the Council of Industrial Design, 28 Haymarket, London SW1. Retail prices quoted are approximate and include purchase tax where applicable.



*The handsome appearance of this trinket box is due to the quality of the leathers used and the delicate charm of the gold tooling with which it is decorated. DESIGNER John Waterer. MAKER S. Clarke & Co Ltd. £7 11s 3d.*



*The care given to the design of this electric heater can be seen in the gently curving forms and sensitive proportions of the metal casing. DESIGNER A. B. Kirkbride in collaboration with the maker. MAKER Belling & Co Ltd. £8 17s 8d.*



*This armchair shows a strong traditional flavour in its square simple lines, yet has an elusive charm quite unlike any other chair. DESIGNER David Pye. MAKER Christie Tyler Ltd. £19 8s.*



This storage unit has a black metal framework giving a lightness and spaciousness of appearance which reflects some current American trends in architecture and design. DESIGNER Terence Conran. MAKER Conran Furniture. £44 19s.



An encouraging British essay in modern pottery forms of a type already developed on the Continent and in the U S A can be seen in this 'Black Prince' tableware. The flowing shapes and well related black scroll decoration show a refinement often lacking in similar designs. MAKER Johnson Brothers (Hanley) Ltd, Stoke-on-Trent. Price from maker on application.

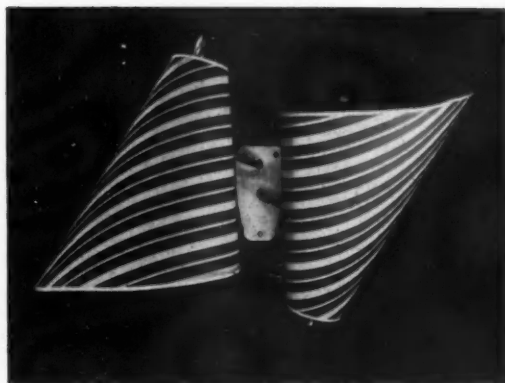


Made of polystyrene this container follows current design in kitchen equipment by making use of simple, smooth shapes. DESIGNER W. Bruce Brown. MAKER Halex Division, The British Xylonite Co Ltd. £1 1s.

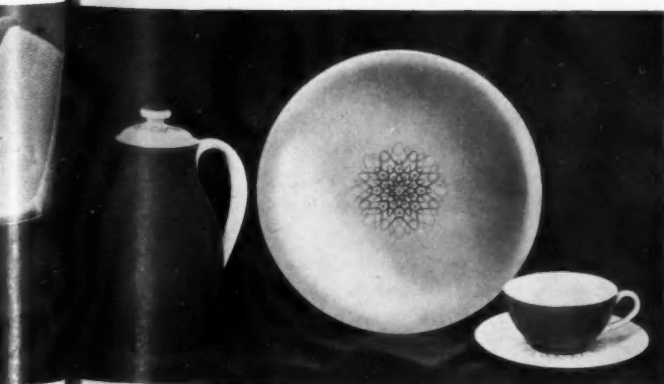
The imaginative arrangement of different coloured lamp housings gave it all fitting a 'highly recommended' place in a recent international competition organized by the Lightrend Co, S A. Rich contrasts to the coloured shades are provided by opaque 'Perspex' reflectors and polished brass framework. DESIGNER J. M. Barnicot. MAKER Falk Stadelmann Co Ltd. £35 10s.



A pleasing appearance has not been ignored by the designer of this kettle which automatically switches the heater off at boiling point. The flange on the knob prevents fingers touching the hot metal. DESIGNER W. M. Russell. MAKER Russell Hobbs Ltd. £4 8s.



Versatility and richness of effect are combined in this wall light fitting. Its shades can be revolved to give light in different directions, while the striped fabric, arranged in irregular spirals, provides a visual justification for this freedom of movement. Metalwork is of polished brass. DESIGNER Doren Leavey. MAKER Oswald Hollman Ltd. £6 9s. 1d.



Another example of the use of the 'coupe' shape illustrates the growing popularity of this form. The modest 'Desert Star' decoration is appropriate and is on a warm beige textured ground. The external surfaces of the cup and coffee pot are glazed in green and give emphasis to the clean precise shapes. MAKER Doulton & Co Ltd, Stoke-on-Trent. Price from maker on application.



The quilted upholstery of this dining chair has been used with particular effect on the back where it expresses the structural framework. DESIGNER A. J. Milne. MAKER Heal & Son Ltd. £27.



The Aspen International Design Conference as seen by Robert Osborn, the well known American cartoonist.

After speaking at the recent International Design Conference at Aspen, Colorado, Michael Farr paid short visits to Chicago and New York. To the following report on the Conference he has added some of his impressions.

## from TALK to TRADE

### A GLIMPSE OF DESIGN IN AMERICA

#### Conference theme and speakers

The conference in the circus-like tent discussed a different theme each morning. Each speaker's paper was handed to members the afternoon before; a novel and successful means of increasing thoughtful response from members of the audience.

#### CROSSROADS: WHAT ARE THE DIRECTIONS OF THE ARTS?

##### Communication

Herbert Bayer *Painter, designer USA*  
Sol Cornberg *Director of studio and plant planning, National Broadcasting Company USA*  
S. I. Hayakawa *Scientist, semanticist, editor 'Etc' USA*  
John Houseman *Movie producer, director Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer USA*

##### Education

Lancelot L. Whyte *Scientist, author UK*  
Earl C. Kelley *Educator, author, professor Wayne University USA*  
Manuel Pizarro *Architect, planning director, department of Communications and Public Works MEXICO*  
Michael Farr *Author, editor DESIGN UK*

##### Light and Structure

Harry Bertola *Sculptor USA*

William de Majo *Designer and consultant UK*  
Walter A. Netsch, Jr *Architect, Skidmore, Owings & Merrill USA*  
Kiyoshi Seike *Architect, professor, Tokyo Institute of Technology JAPAN*

##### Cityscape and Landscape

Arthur Drexler *Curator, Department of Architecture & Design, Museum of Modern Art USA*  
Victor Gruen *Architect, Victor Gruen & Associates USA*  
Henry R. Hitchcock *Art historian (paper only) USA*  
Koichi Ito *Architect, engineer, Nikken Sekkei Komu Co Ltd JAPAN*  
Albert E. Parr *Director American Museum of Natural History USA*

##### Leisure

Arnold F. Arnold *Designer USA*  
Bernard S. Benson *President Benson-Lehner Corp (Applied Cybernetics) USA*  
George D. Culler *Director, Akron Art Institute USA*  
Robert Osborn *Painter, cartoonist USA*

International Design Conference,  
220 South Michigan Avenue,  
Chicago 4, Illinois

WHAT WAS ACHIEVED at the Aspen Design Conference? Nothing, of course, that could be set down in three neat sentences, such as a couple of resolutions or a code of practice. Instead there was everything to be gained from five days of conversation between architects, designers, educators, painters and businessmen, and many of their wives.

"Before we sell something to business we should know what we are selling", said **Will Burtin**, programme chairman, in his opening remarks. This not only explained why the number of designers at the Conference far outdistanced the businessmen, but set a target for the talk that was to follow. 542 people came to the Conference, mainly from all corners of America; an attendance that was more than 200 persons better than any of the four previous years. Worth noting is the fact that the Conference this year, with revenue from enrolments and contributions from industry, easily covered its expenses and plans are now in the making for an even bigger and better occasion next year.

#### ► COMMUNICATING DESIGN BY TV

**Sol Cornberg**, from the National Broadcasting Company, began the discussion by making some startling claims for colour television. It would, he said, become an electronic mirror so sensitive that it could serve the needs of the world community in information, education and sales. Design comes into the picture: "The accelerated rate of communication which permits a design to be seen coast to coast in the space of a few seconds has in it inherent contradictions. To show the design so quickly implies the ability to meet the demand which will be generated. Demand is volume. Volume should mean royalties. Therefore, you might ask, 'How



Part of the audience within the tent.

Photo: Leroy Winbush



The conference tent set in the Aspen meadows with a mountain backdrop.

can the designer lose?' I congratulated a manufacturer recently on the fact that his product was being used in a specific area. He said, 'That's strange. We don't supply that area.' The speed of communication had permitted a competitor to come in with . . . a duplicate of the manufacturer's product before he could get supply up to meet the demand which he had created. How may a designer compete in this hastened time when the ability to obsolete oneself is the criterion for existence?"

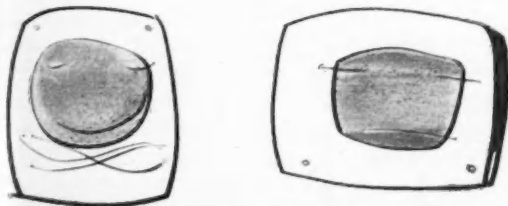
Television, said Cornberg, has added "speed and saturation" to the art of communication. To cope with it the designer will have to make use of cybernetics to translate a design first into electronic impulses, and automation to produce an actual product swiftly. In this way television in colour may permit testing of the product design in the individual environment of the potential purchaser, before capital investments are made in tools.

Commercial television is just starting in Britain and these words have some relevance to it. Although there are 33,000,000 television sets in the U S A and only 4,500,000 over here, the market for selling new designs is still enormous when compared with other advertising media. On the National Broadcasting Company's daily

'Home' show, the introduction of a new product often brings 300 'phone calls in the first half hour.

## ► EDUCATION AND THE CONSUMER

**Herbert Bayer:** "In the muddle of human experiences there are no feelings, no sensations that can be communicated *as such* to be perceived and experienced equally by others." Speaking on 'Education', the theme for the second day of the Aspen Design Conference, **Earl C. Kelley**, of Wayne University, made a similar point which relates directly to the designer's awareness of the needs and preferences of his public. Kelley said: "Each individual is the centre of his own unique universe. He can share this universe with others through communication, but only in part, because those with whom he attempts to communicate must interpret what he offers in accordance with their own unique background." Taken too literally this would make designing for a mass market difficult, if not impossible. So the debate turned on the relationship between the designer and his public. Instead of relying exclusively on his own intuitive knowledge of what is wanted, or the common but fatally deceptive system of market research which questions people about a new product whether they want to buy it or not, it seemed that a stronger foundation could be laid for the operation of the designer's creative faculties. It was suggested that a basis for the erection of higher standards in the mass markets, now often untouched by good modern design, could be established by disinterested research into the way people live with manufactured products. Professor Kelley gave point to the suggestion with his story of a teacher who was once asked what he was going to teach during the coming session. The teacher replied "I don't know. I haven't seen my students yet."



Sol Cornberg of N B C said "Television has speed and saturation". Robert Osborn says "So has the washing machine - why, I can hardly tell them apart!"



Aspen was a meeting ground for more than 500 individuals interested in design. The drawing, left, by Osborn, above, gives his impression of 'the steady conversations' that took place.

### Conference speakers quoted in these pages

Photos by Leroy Winbush  
except that of Victor Gruen  
by Geo. E. Kawamoto Studios.



Will Burtin



Sol Cornberg



Herbert Bayer



Earl C. Kelley



Victor Gruen



Bernard S. Benson



Arnold F. Arnold

### ► FURNISHINGS AND OBSOLESCENCE

Artificial obsolescence, a subject too big for these brief notes, is generally accepted by Americans as inevitable. The Aspen Conference made few complaints except to point out the truism that artificial obsolescence makes people want what they do not need. Leading consultant designers were cagey about it. One said that there was a virtue in wasting things and pointed to the parallel in nature. Another, who drives a 1952 Rover car, said that his firm tried to avoid jobs that had to be made obsolete in a few years. And a third said that the designer should attempt to seduce the public to buy for *real* reasons, changes in function, durability, etc. But Detroit, the home of artificial obsolescence, may be thinking differently. It is rumoured that the coming trend is for black cars with coloured chromium decoration.

Obsolescence proved to be a talking point outside the Conference. For instance, in Chicago a need for something more positive than 'Old Colonial' revivalism as a basis for the designer's new work was clearly shown at the 'Summer Furniture Market'. It seems that the bulk of American furniture firms, unlike the leading consultant designers mainly at work in other industries, still have faith in style changes for their own sake, and bother little about people's *changing needs*. This attitude was attacked in a forthright manner by Mrs Mary Gillies, houses and home furnishings editor of 'McCall's' magazine, when she spoke at the opening of the market to more than 200 of the leading wholesalers and retailers in the industry. "Still the home furnishings industry continues to indulge in, phoney or not, lifetime guarantee certificates. It has done little or nothing to encourage the discard of antiquated furnishings, or to unleash the gusher which would result if families across the country

got the vision of what an attractive, up-to-date, easy-to-care-for house could mean to them."

Mrs Gillies made revealing comments on American design. In her talk, called 'Opportunities in Obsolescence', she castigated the industry for "vacillation between so-called reproductions and twentieth century styles" and said that it undermined the average consumer's desire for change. "Let's face it," she said, "ninety per cent of the furniture sold in the last 125 years was not good design when it was bought, and it has not improved with age. A vigorous long-term obsolescence campaign would be well timed now and would be of real service to the homemakers."

Other American industries producing consumer goods have already taken this policy to heart. They consider the next 25 years to be critical and they have organised new departments to do nothing but study people: the way they think, the way they act. They expect to introduce new lines of products that will be acceptable up to 15 years from now. They claim to have the key to selling the new lines because they know how people are thinking now.

Some of the biggest names among American consultant designers are working on projects like these. But, judging by the stock in two of New York's biggest stores, it seems that the designer's public is more used to selecting from a good variety of products in the same price group than are consumers in this country. Compared with Britain there is just as much reproduction, over-ornate, flashy and startling design about, but there is, industry for industry, more choice among good modern work, with the possible exception of radios.

## ► CITYSCAPE AND GOULASH

Victor Gruen, speaking on the fourth day at Aspen, made the most significant and constructive contribution to the Conference. What we face, he said, is more complex than an old-fashioned 'Crossroads - what are the directions of the arts?' "It is more reminiscent of a merging of a dozen freeways or super highways with clover leaves like tentacles of a giant octopus intertwined with each other and with all of the directional signs removed. The clover leaves have the disturbing quality that, when you are entering a branch thinking it leads to the right, it winds up finally in the opposite direction."

"Our senses take in too much", said Gruen; "more than our emotions and our brains can process. 'Genuine, Kosher, Hungarian goulash with Italian spaghetti, dixie style, served with French bread, \$1.15' announces a sign at a Californian roadside restaurant built in the shape of an atom bomb, run by a couple from Brooklyn who were formerly White Russians.

"We are swamped with an avalanche of new inventions,



A close-up of the panel of speakers for the opening session. The conference moderator, William Friedman, is on the left. Microphones were also distributed among the audience.

discoveries, machines and gadgets. Our outlook is blurred by daily papers, television, magazines. We are exposed to philosophy, art criticism, analytical psychology, nuclear fission, spiritualism. We are confronted with abstractivism, non-objectivism, new realism, surrealism until we all feel as if we were swimming in the middle of that big pot of 'genuine, Kosher, Hungarian goulash, dixie style'."

Coming to the burden of his talk, Victor Gruen said that architecture's most urgent mission today is to convert chaos into order. He enumerated the varieties of American cityscape.

*Technoscape*, he said, is dotted with oil wells, derricks, dumpheaps and auto cemeteries. *Transportationscape*, with miles of cars on concrete deserts, bill boards and dangling wire. *Suburbscape* "with phoney respectability and genuine boredom effectively isolated from the world by traffic jams". And, finally, *sub-cityscape* filling up the distance between cities and suburbs with shacks and shanties, rubbish, dirt and trash.

"Against this sorry backdrop, there appeared a few years ago a new building type - the planned, integrated shopping centre." Victor Gruen himself was responsible for one of these; Northland, near Detroit. He described it as "the first large scale, conscious planning effort made by the forces usually considered as upholders of rugged individualism". It is financed by a co-operative shareholding community and architectural control ensures that even the smallest trader has an unusually good opportunity for business. For instance, in Northland, the largest store has, as its sole identifying sign near the entrance, lettering only 2½ inches high. Shop fronts within colonnades rather than beneath cantilevers maintain architectural unity and give each merchant the chance to exploit his individuality within his own window; there are no flickering neon lights. It



Part of the British exhibit of graphic designs arranged by W. M. de Majo, who was a speaker at the conference. It was later scheduled to be shown at the State University of Florida.

is claimed that Northland is a great success: commercially, because sales are high in the participating stores; culturally, because it has become a 'festival place' in Detroit for important civic, national and religious events. The principles on which it is planned have been applied to about a dozen existing regional shopping centres in America, and they are used as the basis of about 40 large shopping centres now in the construction or planning stages. In one that Victor Gruen is now working on, there will be an air-conditioned centre of shops on two levels in a 30,000 sq ft court. Elsewhere, in a project for replanning a commercial area, the main blocks will be interconnected by promenades, moving sidewalks and small exhibition type electric buses. All motor cars and lorries will move on underground roads.

#### ►AUTOMATION FOR LEISURE

On the last day of the Conference speakers looked at the implications that an ever increasing amount of public leisure will have for designers. First to be discussed was the reason why more and more leisure is imminent.

**Bernard Benson:** "There is undoubtedly a path from automation to leisure and a path from leisure to happiness, but it will not be without careful thinking that we will go with assurance from automation to happiness. Automation is not just the advent of more sophisticated gadgetry. It is potentially to the office worker, the packing assembler and many other groups what the steam shovel was to the ditch digger. A combination of the mechanisation of brawn and the mechanisation of brain provides the foundation for the first major effort on a wide scale to break the direct relationship between productivity and man's time."

But what to do with the leisure once we have got it was the big question. One of the answers was attempted

by **Arnold Arnold**, who assumed that a 20 hour working week was a near-reality. "We are faced with an immediate future in which a promise of too much leisure assumes the proportions of a threat." With 20 hours of work a week we shall have the equivalent of 322 days' holiday a year, all made possible by automatic industrial and commercial operations. "We are at the beginning of a new industrial revolution", he said. "Men will clamour to be permitted to spend more time on their daily jobs . . ."

We should have houses designed for leisure-time employment, maintained Arnold. A home should not be designed for social status, but rather for creative use, a workplace for the family. "We shall have to concentrate more on designing activity provoking implements, rather than end products. The products of automation will have to be incidental to the activities they stimulate. We shall have to concern ourselves more with the new function of eliciting participation (from the consumer) and less with mere mechanical efficiency." And he declared that the 'do-it-yourself' movement - an American craze now on the wane - gives little scope for personal inventiveness. With the tools and kits currently provided "any departure from plans, pre-cut modules or pre-digested fact invites disaster." In his own work as a designer Arnold has made a start with children's toys. In their assembly skill is not demanded; the child "acquires skill through variations and through putting his very lack of skill to use." In a subsequent issue of *DESIGN* we hope to illustrate his ideas.

So Aspen ended on 'Leisure'; a suitable note after five days bristling with talk about the doings of designers in America. As a forum for ideas, surprisingly few of them high falutin' or terrifyingly 'advanced', Aspen filled a need felt, incidentally, in other countries as well. Its departing delegates were already keen to return next year. Although Aspen is high in the Rockies, remote even in America and more than 5,000 miles from London, its gatherings are well worth watching, if only as an indication of design trends in the world's most influential market.



Robert Osborn on 'Leisure', the subject for the last session of the Aspen International Design Conference.

# FURNITURE SURVEY

## Outdoor furniture

A. GARDNER-MEDWIN

*One of a series of articles on modern furniture selected from 'Design Review', the illustrated record of current British products to be seen at the London headquarters of the Council of Industrial Design.*

The following groups of furniture  
are included in the survey

Fully upholstered chairs MARCH

Dining tables and chairs APRIL

Upholstered occasional chairs MAY

Bedroom furniture JUNE

All-purpose chairs JULY

Storage units AUGUST

Occasional furniture SEPTEMBER

Kitchen furniture NOVEMBER

UNTIL RECENTLY we have been rather conservative and unimaginative in this country in our designs for outdoor furniture, and have lagged behind France and Scandinavia, where some charming and often appropriately light-hearted pieces, well suited to the garden, terrace or outdoor restaurant, have been produced.

For many years we lost the art and the inspiration for making such designs as are found in Regency and Victorian garden furniture. The Regency period produced outdoor seats which were light, airy, and frequently revealed a touch of fantasy; the Victorian age was responsible for the rather heavy, but none the less delightful and often technically brilliant examples of cast iron work. Since the war there has been a revival of interest in outdoor furniture, and some useful seats in a number of different materials have resulted. There may be many reasons for this, but undoubtedly two have been outstanding. One was the Festival of Britain, where thousands of outdoor seats in varied colours added to the gaiety of the South Bank: the 'Antelope' and 'Springbok' chairs by Ernest Race and the pierced metal ones

*Stacking garden chair in perforated sheet steel, with mild steel tube frame. It can be supplied in different colours. DESIGNER A. J. Milne. MAKER Heal & Son Ltd.*





*Cane chair on metal frame suitable for use on a terrace or in a café.*

DESIGNER Terence Conran. MAKER Conran Furniture.



*Garden chair made in various hardwoods (elm, walnut, etc), with natural finish. Seat and back are of fawn Pirelli webbing. DESIGNER R. L. Broadbent. MAKER Holton Builders Ltd.*

RIGHT *Garden set of table and four chairs made of seasoned teak taken from vessels that have been broken up. DESIGNER G. Henderson. MAKER The Hughes Bolckow Shipbreaking Co Ltd.*

from Heal's are still remembered with pleasure by many people, particularly by those who were lucky enough to buy them at the end of the Festival.

The second stimulus was the competition for outdoor seats in 1953 and the exhibition of specially designed garden furniture at the Chelsea Flower Show in 1954, both organised by the CoID. Quite a number of the designs which resulted from these two incentives are now stock patterns, and are being bought by public authorities for use in open spaces such as parks, as well as by the public. They are also being used extensively for outdoor restaurants and coffee bars. There is certainly no excuse for lack of inspiration with so many materials to choose from, and whereas wood is still favoured, new shapes and lighter designs can be seen in cane, metal, plastic and compressed fibres. Some of these chairs may seem rather startling at first glance, but a design which looks a trifle eccentric out of its setting often takes its place happily outdoors where it contrasts with a background of natural forms.



*Occasional table with terrazzo top and mild steel frame and legs. The legs are covered with aluminium tubing. DESIGNER and MAKER Slinga Furniture.*





Outdoor chair in formed laminated beech, resin bonded, with waterproof lacquer finish. Stackable and weather resistant. Cushions are of 'Seatex' rubber covered in lined 'Tygan'. DESIGNER Ernest Race. MAKER Ernest Race Ltd.

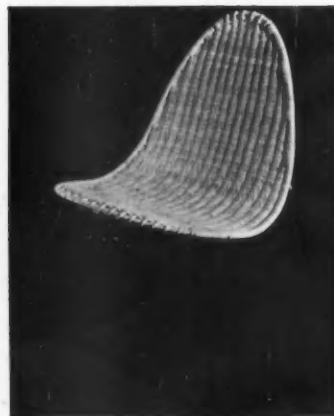
RIGHT Terrace chair in natural woven rattan with iron frame. The seat is of rubberised hair. DESIGNER Michael Inchbald. MAKER Michael Inchbald Ltd.

FAR RIGHT Folding chair with polished iroko seat slats and legs; beech back slats and stretcher rails, with natural finish. DESIGNER Gordon Symondson. MAKER Walker-Symondson Ltd.

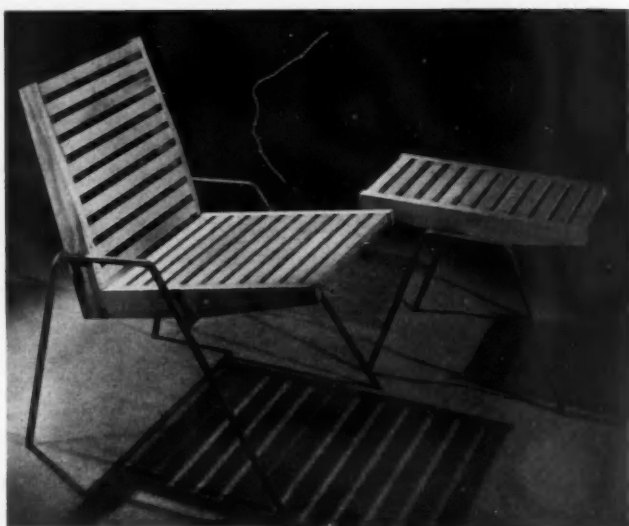


RIGHT Terrace armchair in handwoven golden washed Palembang cane, with frame of mild steel tube which can be supplied in any colour. DESIGNER Norman Slater. MAKER J. Collins & Son Ltd.

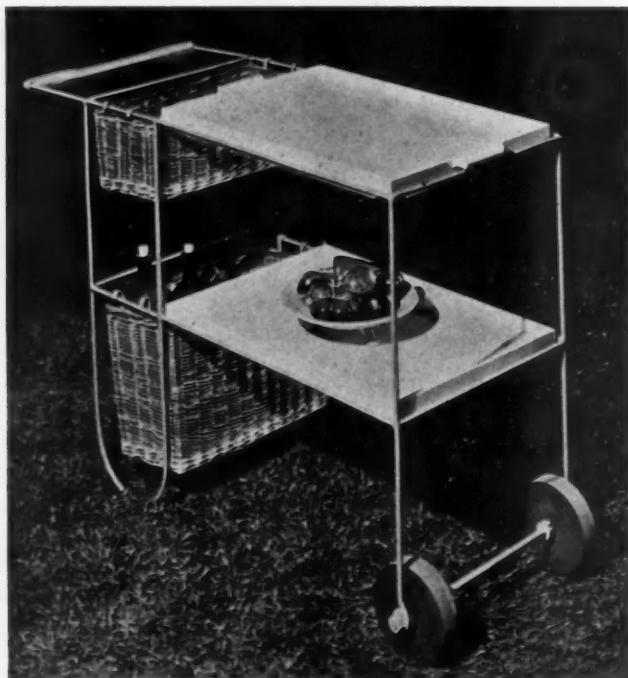
FAR RIGHT Terrace chair in natural willow cane with black steel rod frame. It is stackable. DESIGNER Nigel Walters. MAKER Andrew A. Pegram Ltd.



*Chair and stool in slatted beech with painted iron frame. Both chair and stool can be stacked.*  
 DESIGNER Christopher Heal. MAKER Heal & Son Ltd.



*Double-seater outdoor chair with rustproofed and white stove enamelled steel rod frame. The seat is of resin bonded formed plywood, enamelled in various colours.* DESIGNER Ernest Race. MAKER Ernest Race Ltd.



*Wrought iron garden trolley with woven cane baskets and wooden trays which are removable.*  
 DESIGNER and MAKER Heal & Son Ltd.

*Deck chair with beech frame and red, blue or maroon canvas seat. The chair will adjust itself to the most comfortable position for the occupant.* DESIGNER Gerald Benney. MAKER E. Atkins Ltd.

## USA

## What's happening to American cars?

John Kettle



1953 Studebaker.

*In this article a Canadian designer analyses design developments in the 1955 range of American cars. Some aspects of this subject have also been discussed recently in 'Space for decoration' (DESIGN May pages 9-23 and July pages 24-25).*

If you don't look at them very hard (and if you don't see them very often), all American cars look alike - 'dollar grins' expansively chromed, excessively long, fantastically decorated, gaudily coloured, full of awful people. Like all generalisations, these observations are half-truths.

For instance, it is possible to buy a version of almost every car now on the American roads which has no more chrome on it, no more gadgets and accessories, than any British car

of comparable size. There are still more cars in black than in any other colour. And the typical American car is roughly the same length as a Humber 'Super Snipe'. The difference is that you can buy an American car in many different body styles, with variations of trimming and hundreds of colours and colour-combinations available. The American motorist simply has a bigger choice (and exercises it).

## The 'Big Three'

Detroit sells more on appearance than on anything else, since this is the easiest approach to a mass market. In this market, two cars, the Chevrolet and the Ford, account for more than half of all cars sold, and their parent companies, General Motors and the Ford Motor Co, with eight cars to sell, took more than 80 per cent of the total 1954 market. This is responsible for the impression that all American cars look alike; most of them are alike.

It has become customary to talk of the 'Big Three' - General Motors, Ford and the Chrysler Corporation. General Motors makes five cars - Cadillac, Oldsmobile, Buick, Pontiac and Chevrolet. Ford makes three - Lincoln, Mercury and Ford. Chrysler makes four - Chrysler, DeSoto, Dodge and Plymouth. All three manufacturers create a reasonably distinctive styling, which is adapted to the prices of their various products. It is usually the cheapest models which have the best lines, if only because they are necessarily simpler and less cluttered with extraneous decoration.

This year the three low-priced models - Chevrolet, Ford and Plymouth - have all been completely re-designed, giving an unusual opportunity to compare them (model changes have usually been made at different three-year intervals).

## Popular trends

It is immediately apparent that all three are after the same thing - a car that will look roomier, longer and faster - and have gone about achiev-

ing it in more or less the same way. Thus, all three have lengthened the more or less straight line which extends from headlight to tail-light. All three have created the impression that the front of the car is leaning forward (in the case of two manufacturers simply by putting a sort of visor over the headlights) and all have stretched backwards the tail-light assembly.

All three cars have more window area (Chevrolet, for instance, claims to have increased window area by 19 per cent), and all have adopted General Motors' wrapped-around windscreen. All three are lower, by an inch or two, to increase the apparent length, and two of them actually are longer.

In re-designing the tail-light assembly, all three appear to have adapted the lines of space rockets. This feature was again instituted by General Motors, in its prototype model of a very advanced, and extremely ugly, Cadillac, and appears this year, in some form or other, in four of General Motors' cars, two of Ford's and two of Chrysler's.

## Dream car influence

The use of prototypes in the United States is interesting, and probably explains how styling details appear simultaneously in different cars, which have been designed in extreme secrecy. Both Ford and General Motors have annual showings of what they call 'dream cars' - often much more like nightmare cars - which they use to test out new ideas for public reaction. It was presumably in this way that the rocket ship rear wing of the Cadillac 'El Camino', a strictly comic-strip piece of design, has been adapted by all the 'Big Three'.

Of the three popular cars, Ford is the most dignified, Plymouth the sleekest, Chevrolet the most flamboyant. Plymouth's attenuated appearance can be attributed to three factors: it actually is the longest of the three (16 ft 11½ inches from bumper to bumper); it is the lowest (5 ft - an inch lower than Ford, two

inches lower than Chevrolet); and its windscreen terminates at each side in slanted posts, whereas both Chevrolet and Ford end in vertical posts.

Ford's dignity comes from the uncompromising and skilful use of straight lines. The car has a crispness and firmness about it which indicate a very confident designer, though the vertical windscreen posts are inclined to clash with the angles of the area above the 'waist'.

The new Chevrolet fully lives up to General Motors' reputation for flashiness. Practically all details of its design are inherited from the company's higher-priced cars, and a lot of them sit rather heavily on this smaller relative. The slight reduction

in height has apparently all been made below the waist and this, combined with an increase in window area, gives the car a rather top-heavy appearance. The rectangular radiator grille, emphasised by its cellular pattern; the flat bonnet and trunk; the angle at which the rear window joins the trunk; and the vertical windscreen posts – all create a distinctly 'boxy'-looking car. The grille, whatever else may be wrong with it, does mark a pleasant return to simple decoration: but on the whole, the 1955 Chevrolet is a lumpy and heavy-looking vehicle – the probable model, unfortunately, for the design of future years.

One still looks fruitlessly for anything really following the Studebaker

line. Raymond Loewy's 1953 Studebaker was as elegant a car as America has ever produced; it won a place in the New York Museum of Modern Art on its first appearance; and it is still, in 1955, a handsome car, despite the addition of a massive grille and a broad slab of chrome right along the side. The Plymouth and Dodge come as near as any car to following it. Both are virtually without vertical lines; in both the bonnet slopes down a little towards the front, and the trunk a little towards the back; even the grille of the Dodge is a little reminiscent of the Studebaker. But it would be foolish to say that any other designer has really been very much influenced by Loewy's startling restatement of automobile shape.

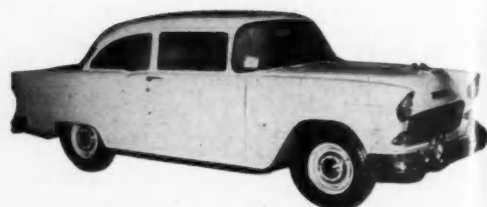
BELOW Studebaker. This is the model current until 1954, with the less florid grille, and no chrome strip on the sides.



BELOW Cadillac 'Eldorado'. Cadillac's 1955 convertible has taken a less pretentious version of the 'El Camino' wing – not incorporated in the other Cadillac models.



BELOW Cadillac 'El Camino' (General Motors). This is a 'dream car', a prototype from which public reaction to styling innovations is judged at special shows. The 'rocket ship' rear wing made its first appearance here.



ABOVE Standard Chevrolet (General Motors). An additional piece of chrome running down from the kink in the 'waist-line' at the second side window, and back to the bottom of the tail-light, is being put on all standard models.

His gracefully sloping planes, which combine the lightness and feeling of a sports car with the sheer size of the modern American car in a remarkably successful way, remain unique. The Studebaker, now as in 1952, is still the best-looking and most modern of the new cars.

The desire for length and lowness in a car is a part of the radical difference in attitude between the designers of Great Britain and the U S A – or perhaps one should say, between Europe and America, for Italian, German and French design exerts a more powerful influence on Coventry than it does on Detroit. A Cadillac, for instance, is just two and a half inches longer than a Rolls Royce 'Silver Wraith', and both cars have

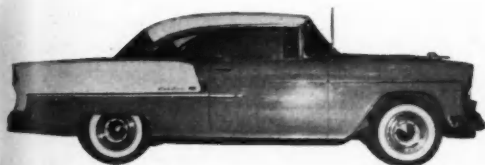
the same wheelbase. But the Rolls is nearly eight inches higher than the Cadillac. It is the same if you compare a Ford with a Humber 'Super Snipe' – the Ford is over one inch longer and three inches lower. Again, if you compare the Morris 'Minor' with the British made (but American designed) Nash 'Metropolitan' you will find that the Nash is one and a half inches longer and five and a half inches lower than the Morris.

One might summarise this difference by saying that the lines of the best American cars have simplicity, while those of the best British cars have subtlety. Even a car as simple in appearance as the Hillman 'Minx', which sells well in North America, is no simpler than the 1955 Ford or

Plymouth; and even the Studebaker is no subtler than almost any well-designed British car. Size has a lot to do with it; to design something as bulky as a 17-ft-long automobile, which can be produced in hundreds of thousands and sold for the equivalent of about £400, demands simplicity.

The American industrial designer, Eliot Noyes, had this to say about American car design last year: "the finest designs all have a clear, simple, single, big design idea which hits you directly with an emotional impact. . . . A good design should have nothing which is irrelevant, accidental or unrelated to the main idea." Can one imagine a British designer saying this?

BELOW Most expensive of the 14 Chevrolet styles – the 'Bel Air' hardtop.



BELOW Standard Ford – most dignified of the less expensive cars with its uncompromising horizontal straight lines.



BELOW The most expensive Ford – the 'Crown Victoria Fairlane' – has plenty of chrome including a band across the roof joining the centre doorposts, and duplicated inside.



ABOVE Plymouth – longest of the popular cars and perhaps the sleekest.



1 Rosenthal

*In connection with the article that appeared in our April issue, the Tea Centre put on a special display of modern teapots. We have asked the writer to provide a postscript dealing with a few additional teapots which attracted attention in the display.*

## One more word about teapots

D. M. Forrest *Commissioner, The Tea Bureau*



2 Susie Cooper



3 R. H. & S. L. Plant



4 R. H. & S. L. Plant



5 Ridgway



6 Walton Pottery

JUDGED BY THE 'Points of a teapot' which I put forward in *DESIGN* for April, those now illustrated all take a high place. They are also of special interest as revealing modern trends more clearly than some of those originally shown. Included, as a sort of touchstone, is Loewy's Rosenthal pot, which I still regard as the nearest to perfection, 1. Purely traditional in shape, and of delicate charm in decoration, is the Susie Cooper design, 2. It pours well, is quite comfortable in the hand and should be very easy to keep clean. My only functional criticism is that although its deep rimmed lid is one of the few that is perfectly safe at all angles, it has been provided with a *double* locking device – a peculiar example of the belt-and-braces policy.

The two pots from the enterprising firm of R. H. & S. L. Plant show clearly the latest tendencies. The older pot, 3, the 'Shirley' shape, has all the ponderous curlicues which were supposed to express fine workmanship in an earlier day. It is in fact a good working teapot, though rather heavy in the hand. This firm's new model – the 'Era' shape, 4 – has the same practical virtues with a new elegance of line, but the disc-like knob may rapidly become a 1955 cliché. The decoration of this particular pot is pleasant, though under-vitalised to about the same degree as the 'Shirley's' bouquets, 3, above, are overdone. 5, from Ridgway Potteries, has points of special interest. It has to my eye a particularly fine ovoid shape and bears the marks of careful thought throughout. This is not surprising since it is the work of the group design section, directed by Professor Baker. As to its individual features, the spout has an unusual sliced-off effect, evidently intended to encourage good pouring. It does in fact pour well, and bone china has a natural advantage over earthenware in this respect. The lid is admirably shaped and stays on well without 'knibs'. The handle – a Raymond Loewy influence? – has an unfortunate 'squeeze' on the top finger. This pot is available in a range of decorative styles and while the brown, grey and pale yellow sprays on the one illustrated are very pleasing, the concentric brown shading on the lid seems too rigid.

Lastly, a rather out-of-the-way, but attractive newcomer, 6, produced by Walton Pottery. The shape is taut and prim, very close to the silver teapots of about 1715, and yet modern in feeling. The example illustrated is not quite perfect functionally – no steam vent in the lid and a spout so narrow that a tea leaf might well interrupt the flow. It is, however, subject to modification. On a small point of appearance, the vague modelling of the knob contrasts with the sharp and subtle lines everywhere else. Its hard, vitrified body is lustrous grey-black.

# NEWS

## CoID appointment

The Board of Trade announces that the President has appointed F. Shepard Johnson to be a member of the CoID to take the place of A. E. Hewitt who has resigned. Mr Shepard Johnson is a joint managing director of Johnson Brothers (Hanley) Ltd, a director of Sovereign Pottery of Hamilton, Ontario, and President of the British Pottery Manufacturers Federation.

## CONFERENCES

### CoID conference

The Scottish Committee of the CoID recently held a conference for Scottish co-operative retail societies in the Grosvenor Restaurant, Glasgow. Alister Maynard opened the conference, and was followed by Henry Hellier who spoke on 'Present day trends in home furnishing'. After comparing the Victorian style with that of the 1920s, Mr Hellier suggested that we are now going through a period "somewhere between these two extremes of the swing of the pendulum". More richness, more colour, more comfort were wanted today after the bleakness of recent years, but even so this was by no means the age of the connoisseur. J. P. McCrum, who spoke later on 'Furniture Design', observed that humanity, for the most part, "dislikes nothing more than a new idea". But as the machine cannot produce any relief decoration of a quality equal to that produced by hand, the problem of making modern furniture must be approached afresh. This means that people must overcome their natural aversion to new ideas. Other speakers, who included C. Alexander and W. D. Ritchie, agreed that even in Glasgow modern furniture was proving more popular.

### Annual conference

The 1956 annual conference of the National Society for Art Education has been arranged to take place at Llandudno, North Wales, from April 3-7. The County Hotel will be the headquarters, and will accommodate all the delegates.

## EXHIBITIONS

### British exhibition in Denmark

King Frederik IX of Denmark, who is joint Patron of the British Exhibition at Copenhagen with our own Queen, performed the opening ceremony in the Town Hall of Copenhagen on September 29. Peter Thornycroft, President of the Board of Trade, represented the British Government at the ceremony. On October 12, the Duke of Edinburgh will arrive in Copenhagen in the Royal Yacht 'Britannia' and will visit the exhibition in the course of the two following days. A. R. W. Low, Minister of State, Board of Trade, will be present at the same time. The exhibition, which is exclusively British, is being organised on a large and imaginative scale. More than 600 British firms are taking part, showing a representative range of products from heavy engineering and motor vehicles to textiles

and fancy goods. Associated with the exhibition will be a series of special events which will put Copenhagen *en fête* by "Bringing Britain to Scandinavia" for the whole two and a half weeks. The purpose of the exhibition is to boost British exports in the Scandinavian countries, which are traditionally extremely good customers of ours but where fierce competition, especially from Western Germany, is now being felt.

### At the Victoria and Albert

An exhibition of the work of E. McKnight Kauffer, comprising posters, rugs, illustrations and paintings, will be opened by T. S. Eliot at the Victoria and Albert Museum on October 6. The exhibition will last from October 6-November 27, and will be open to the public from 10 am-6 pm on weekdays and from 2.30 pm-6 pm on Sundays. Admission is free.

### German fair

The eighth Fiera Tedesca dell'Artigianato will take place in Munich, Bavaria, from April 27-May 10, 1956. It is hoped that the fair will enjoy a success equal to that obtained by the one held last May, when a large international entry was received.

## COMPETITIONS

### Award for British designer

Nigel Walters of London was among those receiving awards in the first section of the international furniture competition at Cantù in Italy (DESIGN April page 46). There were 216 competitors from all over the world, and the total value of prizes amounted to nearly 14 million lire. The international jury was presided over by Gio Ponti of Italy, and consisted of Alvar Aalto, Finn Juhl, Professor Romano Barocchi and Carlo De Carli. The first prize in the first section, 'Furnishing for four different settings', went to Werner Blaser of Switzerland.

### Typographical competition

The executive committee of the 1955 Premio Milano-Liegi is promoting an international competition for the best typography and printing of an advertising page suitable for use in a journal. The competition is open to all printers, and each competitor may present up to two exhibits, provided that the solutions are substantially different, and not a mere variation of a single composition with only colour differences or minor changes. Only one prize will be awarded to each competitor, and no entrance fee is required. The first prize is of 350,000 lire, together with a gold medal from the Commune of Milan. There are nearly 30 other prizes ranging down to 15,000 lire. Details of the competition should be obtained from Premio Milano-Liegi, 4 Via Lanzone, Milan, Italy, to which address entries must be submitted by October 30.

### Photographing modern architecture

The closing date for this competition sponsored by 'Architectural Design' is October 20, and the first prize is £25. Particulars and entry forms are to be found in the June, July, August and September issues of 'Architectural Design'.

### Layton annual awards

Jesse Collins of the Central School of Arts and Crafts will represent the CoID on the jury for the 1956 competition organised by C. & E. Layton Ltd. This is the second competition for Layton annual awards.



### Portable display

This display packs flat for travelling and is designed to be assembled by the agents. It is supplied in three colour schemes with assembly instructions silk screened on the base of the platform. The designers were T. Booth Waddicor & Partners for British Olivetti Ltd, and the makers were Bryant and Knowlson Ltd.

## PUBLICATIONS

### Colour planning

A leaflet entitled 'Colour Planning' was recently produced for Donald Brothers' Old Glamis Fabrics. It is available on application to Donald Brothers Ltd, Old Glamis Factory, Dundee, or 287 Regent Street, W1.

### Moholy-Nagy

A small booklet containing reproductions of the work of Moholy-Nagy is available from Alec Tiranti Ltd. This booklet shows work reminiscent of many examples in Moholy-Nagy's 'Vision in Motion', and serves to remind us once again of the outmoded *avant-garde* productions of the 1920s. A similar style of art is revealed in another booklet called 'Divergences', which is published by the Exposition Galerie Arnaud, Paris.

### Lighting directory

A directory listing the names, addresses, trade names and products of 250 firms which manufacture lighting equipment has just been published by 'Light and Lighting'. The products listed include all types of electric lamps, luminaires, accessories and equipment. Copies of the directory can be obtained from 'Light and Lighting', 32 Victoria Street, London SW1, price 1s 6d post free.

### 75 years of furnishing

'The Cabinet Maker and Complete House Furnisher', which is published by Benn Brothers Ltd, has completed 75 years of publication and celebrates the occasion by publishing 'Furniture & Furnishings 1880-1955' in magazine format, separately from the weekly issues. This publication of 128 pages provides an editorial review of the development of the furniture industry from a largely handcraft basis to its present highly mechanised state, and tells the story

of the parallel growth of the retail trade. There are also articles reviewing the changes in the past 75 years in the bedding, furnishing fabric, carpet and other floor covering industries, all of which come within the scope of 'The Cabinet Maker'. 'The Cabinet Maker' was founded by Sir John Williams Benn, and this year also marks the seventy-fifth anniversary of the foundation of the House of Benn, which now controls 14 trade and technical journals.

### Planning large kitchens

Few aspects of modern architectural planning require such careful attention to detail as the layout of large kitchens. Whether in factory canteens, office block cafeterias, or restaurants, a well planned kitchen is necessary to ensure smooth and efficient preparation and serving of meals to the staff and the public.

Realising the need for skilled kitchen layout advice for architects, builders and others occupied with the major constructional details of buildings, with probably little time to worry about the exacting minutiae of the position of individual items of kitchen equipment, Stotts of Oldham, the kitchen-planners and catering equipment manufacturers, has issued a booklet called 'Large Scale Kitchens and Their Planning'. In 28 pages, the booklet gives some basic information required to plan a large kitchen, from the empty shell, to the complete efficient meal preparation and serving unit.

### Modular Society

The transactions of the Modular Society, which have previously been circulated to its members in duplicated form, now appear in print and are on sale to the public. This change is made for the convenience of members, some of whom were finding the large amount of technical information rather heavy reading in typescript; but chiefly for the reason that the time has come to interest a wider public in the development of modular co-ordination.

The 'Modular Quarterly' will continue the policy of the society, in its open meetings and in the previous issues of its transactions, of providing an open forum for the presentation of all shades of opinion upon modular co-ordination and different theories about its proper development. Its pages will not be restricted to contributions from members of the Modular Society. It can be obtained from the Society's headquarters at 22 Buckingham Street, London WC2 at 5s per copy. The annual subscription is 18s.

### Industrial welfare

Two booklets by the Industrial Welfare Society Inc entitled 'Factory Gardens' and 'Modernisation of industrial buildings', stress the improvement in morale and efficiency brought about by better design in industrial buildings. This can often be achieved without wholesale scrapping, and the thousands of sturdy buildings in need of overhaul or replanning in Britain make the appearance of these publications particularly timely. They can be obtained from 48 Bryanston Square, London W1, at 2s 6d per copy.

### Wool review

The annual review of the International Wool Secretariat and the Wool Bureau Incorporated was recently published. With synthetic fibres so much in use today, it is proper that publicity should be given to wool. The writers of this booklet, in their enthusiasm for wool, even go so far as to show a photograph of a "wool wedding" when bride and bridesmaids dressed in wool.



### Flats for the Modern Movement

"Comfortable living for young professional people who would otherwise be condemned to living in digs." It was with this object in view that the Lawn Road Flats were built 21 years ago by Jack Pritchard, after a replica of a single flat had been shown at the Exhibition of British Industrial Art at Dorland Hall in 1933. This type of exhibition proved a useful method in the earlier days of the Modern Movement of revealing a new architectural style to the public, and in this instance public enthusiasm was sufficient to provide deposits on the flats, which were, for that date, a fine architectural achievement. Wells Coates, the architect, was able to give comfortable living accommodation to a number of artists and intellectuals, some of whom in later years were in hot retreat from Hitler's Germany. The Moholy-Nagys, Gropius, his wife and daughter, were among those who lived in the Lawn Road Flats, and gave the architect their highest praise. Almost the only criticism ever made of the concrete building occurred just after the war, when, as a result of lack of repair, the Lawn Road Flats won the second prize for the Ugliest Building in a competition organised by the now defunct magazine 'Horizon'. No such observation could be made today on the flats, the exterior of which looks remarkably up-to-date, and justifies the architect's original brief "to provide a building which should not be obsolete in 1950". The interior photograph shows a flat similar to the one on view in the Dorland Hall Exhibition, and proves that a satisfactory factory result can be achieved with objects of Spartan simplicity.

## MISCELLANEOUS

### Industrial cinemagazine

Further co-operation between industry and government in the interests of export promotion and British industrial prestige abroad is announced by a committee on which sit representatives of the Federation of British Industries, the Board of Trade and the Central Office of Information. The COI is to produce a regular industrial cinemagazine, in which stories about British industry will be carried to important export markets. Each issue of this film magazine will contain three or four items, and a firm or association whose product is featured will meet the cost of filming its story. In return the government departments concerned will pay for foreign language versions, for copies, and for distribution overseas.

The main distribution will be in the United States, Latin America, Western Germany and the Commonwealth. The cinemagazine is to be made in series-style in order to interest television markets in the USA, Canada, and Latin America; but it will also be suitable for cinema showing in all territories, and for specialised showings, for instance, at gatherings promoted by a company's local agent in consultation with the commercial attaché of an embassy or legation.

### Welsh woollen manufacturers

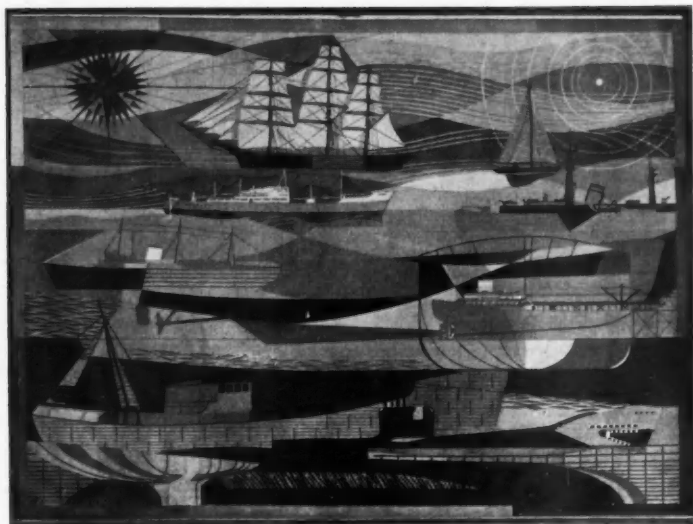
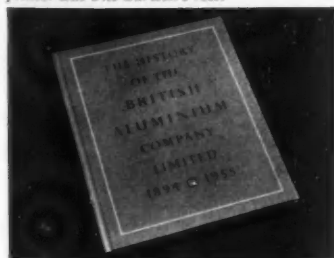
The main object of the recently formed Welsh Woollen Manufacturers' Association Ltd is to promote the prosperity of the woollen textile industry in Wales. Problems facing the association are the development of publicity and marketing services, technical improvements in the industry, the provision of technical training for the operatives, and the encouragement of young people to take up work in the mills. By forming this association, the process begun in 1929 of attempting to make the industry better known is repeated on a broader scale.

### Atlas louvre attachments

The Atlas Lighting Division of Thorn Electrical Industries has introduced a translucent opal plastic louvre attachment for 11 inch fluorescent tubes. Under the name 'Clipluxe', it is designed primarily for use with single tube fittings, and may be attached to bare tubes in any fitting to form a low priced louvre, eliminating glare and giving a good degree of diffusion. Moulded in sections 11 inches long, 'Clipluxe' is packed in cartons containing sets of five to fit a single five ft 80 watt tube.

### Aluminium history

'The History of the British Aluminium Co Ltd' is a substantial volume bound in sky blue linen. It sets forth its information in a sober and authoritative manner, and does not seek an originality unsuitable to the subject. The printer was The Curwen Press.



### Marine mural

This mural hanging for the Weir Lecture Hall, Institution of Naval Architects, is silk screen printed on a heavy linen supplied by Donald Brothers Ltd. A wide colour and tonal range was used in order to cover as many types of shipbuilding as possible, and to hint at the development of naval architecture. The designer and printer was Alexander H. Williamson.

### Engineering design

The Institution of Engineering Designers announces that it intends to add a new section to its library to help members in search of components and materials needed for new design projects. Manufacturers whose goods are of interest to engineering designers are invited to send information to the General Secretary, The Institution of Engineering Designers, 38 Portland Place, London W1.

### SIA 'Design Oration'

The first SIA 'Design Oration' is to be given by Dr J. Bronowski at the Royal Society of Arts, John Adam Street, Adelphi, London WC2, on December 2 at 7.30 pm. Tickets are available from the SIA. To mark the twenty-fifth year since the inception of the SIA the first Annual Award of the SIA will be made at the same time. The SIA medal is awarded to the most outstanding designer of the year, who is nominated by members of the Society and elected by their Council.

### Designers' Ball

The SIA is holding its second Designers' Ball at the Royal Festival Hall on November 4. Tickets at 27s 6d each for Members of the SIA and their friends are available from the SIA office, and at 35s for the public from the Royal Festival Hall Box Office, Waterloo, London SE1.

### Art and industry

The Wolverhampton College of Art is forming an industrial design department. The first step in this process was the recent appointment as Lecturer of Charles Crowley, formerly the development engineer of John Harper's of Willenhall. An Industrial Design Advisory Committee of manufacturers and trade unionists in the Wolverhampton area of the West Midlands is being appointed at the invitation of the Local Education Committee.

## LETTERS

### Design or looks?

SIR: Your publication comes to my desk each month for routing to the technologists of the Quartermaster Research & Development Command which employs me as a secretary. I find it a fascinating little magazine and read it thoroughly before I send it on its way. Your criticism of American kitchen and laundry equipment design often finds me wondering if you are really interested in 'design' or just 'looks'. Your recent article on the Parkinson washer and wringer is one example. You show an unusual enthusiasm for this machine which seems to have an admirable new way of washing. But what difference does it make if the wringer does look somewhat better than on previous models? It's still a wringer and a nuisance. Is there no one in the UK who will try to design a low-cost washer which can provide damp drying without wringing? Particularly in a gas-fired contrivance? And what is so clean-lined about the 'Crusader' cooker? It looks as if cheapness were the chief criterion. It is all cut up with buttons and handles and looks as if it would topple forward at the slightest jog. I have noted your past criticism of the obtrusiveness of controls on American stoves and refrigerators. But to the women who use these machines the controls prevent much bending and squinting which I found necessary with English stoves similar to some you have considered to be of excellent design. As for refrigerators - is English monotony more indicative of good design than American excess? Aren't they rather opposite extremes, one of timidity, the other of garishness? In these days the housewife does her own kitchen work and takes pride

in her kitchen's efficiency and attractiveness. She wants something more than inoffensiveness (which is the best I can say for the refrigerators you have shown). As a final question - do you (or the producing firms) ever test these designs on housewives or are you trying to judge for them, when design and looks are outstanding? My congratulations on a thought-provoking publication.

NORMA P. LALLY  
27 Charles Street  
Natick, Mass, U S A

The CoID has appointed, through trade associations, a number of industrial advisers to remark on the technical efficiency and quality of manufacture of all products selected for 'Design Review' in the electrical, gas, hardware and street lighting industries. All electrical heating, cooking and lighting appliances are submitted to the Electrical Development Association. In cases of doubt manufacturers are asked to submit an actual product for testing at the E D A Testing House at Leatherhead. All heating and cooking appliances using gas are submitted to the Senior Technical Officer at Watson House, the North Thames Gas Board's laboratories. Similarly, manufacturers are asked to submit products about which there is any doubt to Watson House for testing. Details of all hardware products submitted are sent to the technical panel nominated by the National Hardware Alliance. This panel includes the President of the Alliance and two other nominees connected with the retailing and manufacture of hardware goods. No lighting column for use as street furniture is accepted for the Approved List of Lighting Column Designs unless it has been designed to a British Standards specification. Similarly, the street lighting lanterns cannot be included in our records unless they have been designed to the appropriate standard. Where there is doubt the design is submitted to a technical assessor nominated by the Electric Lighting Fittings Association. Where applicable, British Standards specifications are used in the assessment of all products. - EDITOR

### 'Space for decoration'

SIR: I have had my say on the 'Aesthetics of Expendability', and Mr Blake has had his. Our viewpoints diverge so radically that the argument cannot be taken further without the use of more of the emotion-loaded language that appears in Mr Blake's last paragraph ("vulgar", "depressing", "commercialism", etc) which, though it may relieve the feelings of the disputants, does not help anybody else. There is just one point that I want to clarify, however. Mr Blake, in telescoping my argument (also in the last paragraph), makes me say that the shapes of science, science-fiction and design-for-expendability are curved. This I took care not to say - it was two different kinds of space I was contrasting - and the fact that science-fiction space is curved does not mean that the shapes that go with it are curved. The typical American automobile signals its adherence to the world of science-fiction space-concepts by using shapes that, in the popular imagination, belong to that world - and those shapes, in the present transitional condition precipitated by Wernher von Braun's revolutionary overhaul of space-travel thinking, are extremely various. In any case, it is clear from the sharply angular tailfins of the 'El Camino' that its designer is quite as up-to-the-minute as Mr Blake. Last year's science-fiction shapes were angular, but has Mr Blake seen 'The Conquest of Space'?

RAYNER BANHAM  
36c Oppidans Road  
London NW3



116 by France and Daverkosen, Denmark.



124 by France and Daverkosen, Denmark.



'Ritz' by Everest (Long Eaton) Ltd.



'Embassy' by George Stone (Furniture Ltd).

### A question of resemblances

SIR: Your May issue of DESIGN illustrates on the cover a chair which closely resembles our model 116, designed for us by Mr E. Kindt-Larsen. There is another illustration of the same chair on page 28.

In the same issue, on page 27, there is an illustration, 8, of a chair which also closely resembles our model 124 by Mr Ole Wanscher, professor of architecture at the Academy of Copenhagen. Both models are internationally known and are or have been distributed by 20 or more leading furniture retailers in the British Isles. Model 116 was selected for last year's 'Triennale' and awarded a *Diplome d'Honneur*, the corresponding sofa received the 'Good Design' award of the New York Museum of Modern Art in January 1955.

We should welcome an explanation from the British manufacturers.

C. W. F. FRANCE  
France and Daverkosen  
Orholm/Lyngby, Denmark

NOTE We asked Everest (Long Eaton) Ltd and George Stone (Furniture) Ltd to comment on this letter. - EDITOR

SIR: The similarity of our 'Ritz' to France & Daverkosen's model 116 is in question. I have journeyed to London to inspect a 116 chair and although in certain points of outline there may be a similarity, there are many obvious differences in shapes, dimensions and specification.

The chief feature common to both chairs is the shaping of the frame timbers where the back meets the bottom side rails. I am informed that our designer took his theme for this from an Egyptian chair reputed to be about 2000 years old, and as there are other designs on the market, including some

by Finn Juhl, and Madsen and Schubell of Copenhagen, which may have been influenced similarly, we fail to see why this question has arisen.

To conclude, we are British furniture manufacturers and whilst we do not object to foreign competition, we shall continue to do whatever we can to counteract this by providing well made furniture, of good design, for the British retailers and public.

J. R. COMERY, Joint Managing Director  
Everest (Long Eaton) Ltd  
Long Eaton, Nr Nottingham

SIR: We refute any suggestion of copying and claim that our chairs are complementary to our past productions. Proof of this can be found in our old catalogues.

In 1951 we produced our model 411, the basic design of which was centred around a joined arm and front leg, all perfectly rounded. Our 'Regal' (cane sides), from which developed our very successful and popular 'Railton' model, was specially designed for George Stone in 1952. The first model was produced in January 1954. These were entirely show-wood chairs/suites; consistent with our past productions, but embodying loose 'Latex Foam' cushions and covers fitted with zip fasteners. Our 'Embassy', designed in 1954 and produced in 1955, is complementary to all of the above mentioned, together with certain pre-war productions. We would add that the arms on the model 411 and 'Embassy' would go equally well with cabriole legs and could then be dated 'Queen Anne'.

In closing we would state that we have exported 'Bergere' chairs/suites to Denmark in the past; perhaps this may have influenced Danish design.

J. H. HILLS, Manager  
George Stone (Furniture) Ltd  
High Wycombe, Bucks

# BOOKS

**Symposium on Human Factors in Equipment Design**, edited by W. F. Floyd and A. F. Welford, H. K. Lewis & Co Ltd, 1954, 21s.

The Ergonomic Society at their symposium in 1951 discussed the biological characteristics of man which need to be known if furniture, machinery, clothing and other equipment are to be designed to allow him to work with the greatest efficiency. Some of the papers have been published in this book. The anatomists, physiologists and psychologists at the symposium covered such matters as bodily measurements in relation to the measurement of the work place and tools; the functions and methods of working of muscles, joints and ligaments; the measurement of the effects on man of climate, heat and cold, ventilation and clothing; and the effects of design on ease and speed of seeing and reacting to dials and other indicators. Problems were identified, difficulties discussed and further work defined, but the results were not necessarily set out so that the designer could use them. Nevertheless, the book provides a good background, and all the essays are free from jargon and are readily understood. One or two could be of direct assistance to the designer. Dr Åkerblom's excellent summary of his work on seating is an example.

Dr Morant's paper on body size and work spaces is another, where he describes how to conduct experimental trials. Experimental trials are the usual, and indeed often the only method open to the designer at present of making sure his equipment fits the user. Wrongly conducted trials can be highly misleading and this clear but short description should be most helpful.

The general impressions created by the book are two: first, that much patient research into human factors is still required; and secondly, that the main trouble for designers will arise not in understanding the different parts of the subject, but in putting them together in an intelligible whole: for when the parts are assembled, the deductions derived from the experiments relating to each part are not necessarily valid. It is likely to be difficult to reduce the subject to the level of a layman's textbook, so that the biologist himself will need to join the equipment design team. B.O'D.

**John Henry Mason**, written, arranged, set in type, printed and bound at the L.C.C. Central School of Arts and Crafts, Southampton Row, W.C1

J. H. Mason, RDI, who died in 1951, was less known even in his own trade than his merit and work justified. In part this was due to his modesty. He graduated at a time when the Arts and Crafts movement was at its zenith and never lost his faith in the virtue of fine craftsmanship. Apprenticed first to a trade house, he joined the famous Doves Press in 1900 at the age of 25 and thus came early under the influence of Emery Walker, Cobden Sanderson, Edward Johnston and Professor Lethaby. A whole generation of typographers learned from him at the Central School of Arts and Crafts where he taught printing for some 30 years. Mason was a purist, devoted to Caslon Old Face and the fine printing of works of scholarship. He himself was a considerable scholar and linguist. His advice was sought by Count Kessler for his Cranach Press in Weimar, and he was one of the founders of that influential paper 'Imprint', which began its short life in 1913. Today Mason's work may seem too restricted for our printing schools, just as life drawing is out of fashion for the young



## Reading service station

C. H. Aslin, President of the Royal Institute of British Architects, recently opened the new Reading service station at 856 Oxford Road, Reading. The station was built by the architectural section of Shell-Mex and B.P. Ltd, and shows an attractive and encouraging departure from the "cedar shingles, thatched roofs, and all the other trimmings from the architecture of the past, which really had no place in the modern service station". Mr Aslin also pointed out that this architecture is admirably suited to the requirements of the motorist, the oil company, the station operator and the community.

graphic artists. As a basis for sound typography, however, his teaching stands firm. The printing trade still has plenty to learn from him. This memoir from the L.C.C. Central School is a dignified tribute.

NOEL CARRINGTON

## Industrie Handwerk Formgebung, Bayerischer Schulbuch - Verlag, Munich

This book, published by the Ministry of Education of Bavaria, is an informative and concise statement of the history, aims and facilities of all trade schools and colleges in Bavaria. They specialise in one branch or the other of industry, and are usually situated at its centre. Most of them were founded by trade organisations and later taken over by the state. Some train pure craftsmen, as do the schools for hand-embroidery at Münchberg and Naila, for pillow-lace at Schönbach, woodcarving at Oberammergau, basketmaking at Lichtenfels, violin-building at Mittenwald, and for stone masonry at Wunsiedel. The colleges of textiles at Münchberg, ceramics at Landshut and two schools at Zwiessel and Kaufbeuren-Neugablonz (which cover all branches of the glass industry, including costume jewellery) are equipped with all technical facilities for mass production. The student is required to have served an apprenticeship in industry before he can enter for these courses which are very varied, and even cater for sales personnel. After successfully completing the course in the design classes, the student qualifies for entrance into an academy. The aesthetic standard in these design classes is very high, as the illustrations in the book show.

MARGARET LEISCHNER

## The Care of Woodwork in the Home, Edward H. and Eva Pinto, Ernest Benn Ltd, 5s

One might expect a doctor, with his specialised knowledge of diseases, to worry more about his health than the layman. In fact this is not so, because as well as knowing about the diseases, he also knows about their cure. In a similar way deterioration of woodwork sounds alarming when one learns about it in this book, but fortunately Edward Pinto and his wife explain in a most clear and non-technical way how it can be cured. Dealing at first with the proper steps to take in preserving furniture and polished woodwork, the book goes on to describe stripping and home repair treatment. Subsequent chapters deal with the real enemies of woodwork - beetles of various types, wet and dry rot, and the action that should be taken to fight them. Of dry rot one reads:

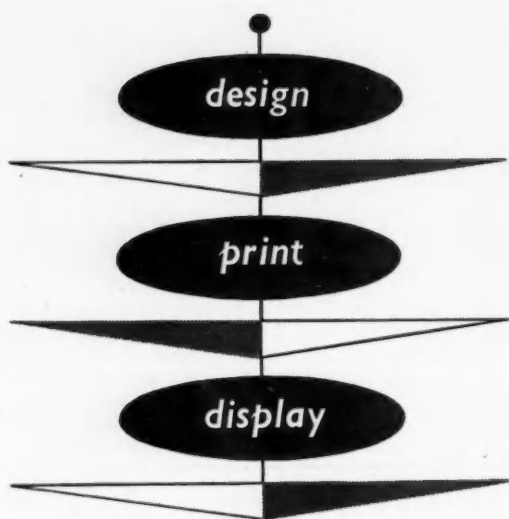
"Panic never helps, but dry rot is good reason for alarm and quick, vigorous and thorough action." Those who value their furniture and their home will find this book a help in the diagnosis and treatment of woodwork that has become diseased. D.H.

## Correction

DESIGN September page 16. The illustration showed a Canadian Pacific Railway Co train and not a Canadian National Railways train as stated.

## Designers in this issue

Edward Ardizzone, FSIA (16, 20, 21). Christian Barman, RDI, FRIBA, FSIA (14, 16). J. M. Barnicot, MSIA (37). Gerald Benney, DESRCA (46). Misha Black, OBE, FSIA (15, 16). John Boissevain (27). R. L. Broadbent (44). W. Bruce Brown, MSIA (37). R. L. G. Carter, DESRCA (26). Jean Cocteau (30). Terence Conran (27, 37, 44). Susie Cooper, RDI (50). Lucienne Day, ARCA, FSIA (26). Robin Day, ARCA, FSIA (26, 27). Len Deighton (16). Sir Jacob Epstein, RBE (30). James Fitton, ARCA, FSIA (20, 21). Kenneth Garland (Art Editor). Milner Gray, RDI, FSIA (13, 14, 15, 16, 18). Ronald Grierson, MSIA (26). W. S. Hattrell & Partners (26). Clifford Hatts, ARCA, MSIA (18). Ashley Havinden, OBE, RDI, FSIA (15). Christopher Heal, FSIA (45). G. Henderson (44). F. H. K. Henrion, MBE, FSIA (cover). Michael Inchbald, MSIA (45). A. B. Kirkbride, BA (29, 36). Lynton Lamb, FSIA (14). Doreen Leavey (37). Dennis Lennon, MC, ARIBA (27). Raymond Loewy, SID (48). Tom Lupton, ARIBA, MA (26). W. M. de Majo, MBE, MSIA (42). A. J. Milne, MSIA (37, 43). Bruce Moore (30). John Morton, ARIBA (26). Eliot Noyes (49). John Piper (21). David Pye, AAHonsDip, ARIBA, FSIA (36). Ernest Race, RDI, FSIA (45, 46). Peter Ray, FSIA (16, 17, 18). Tibor Reich, FSIA (26). W. M. Russell (37). Ronald Sandiford, MSIA (18). Hans Schlegel, FSIA (32). Cherna Schotz (27). Christopher Sharpe (16). Norman Slater (45). Sheila Stratton, ARCA, MSIA (26). Graham Sutherland (30). Gordon Symondson, MSIA (45). T. Booth Waddicor & Partners (51). Nigel Walters, MSIA (45). Ward & Austin (26). John Waterer, RDI, FSIA (36). Wells-Coates, OBE, FRIBA, FSIA, PhD, BA, BSC (52). A. H. Williamson, ARCA (53). S. John Woods, FSIA (19-21). Frank Lloyd Wright (12). Desmond Wyeth, MSIA (18).



**WALKERS**  
**(showcards) limited**  
**MANCHESTER 1. CEN. 4965/6/7**

City of Leicester Education Committee

## *Leicester College of Art*

Principal, Kenneth Holmes

O.B.E., A.R.C.A., M.S.I.A., F.S.A.E., HON.F.I.B.D.

Recognised by PROFESSIONAL BODIES, INDUSTRIALISTS, and the MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, as one of the most comprehensively equipped Colleges of Art in the country for all types of training, in Art, Design for Industry and Commerce, Architecture and Building.

For General and Departmental Prospectuses, apply to the Registrar, College of Art, The Newarke, Leicester.

All students admitted on a probationary period of one year. A waiting list of posts is always available for those who complete their courses. Hostels for women and men, refectories, libraries, gymnasias and playing fields.

*The College is open for visitors  
 by appointment from Monday to Friday  
 during the session*

**Cintique**  
 COMFORTABLE FURNITURE

Clean, colourful and comfortable . . . sitting is believing!

*Cintique Chair Co., Andrews Road, Cambridge Heath, London, E.S.*

